

THE AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC

Occasional

The Voice of Authentic American Folk Music: containing articles, interviews, photographs and first-hand reports on blues, gospel and country music. Compiled and edited by Chris Strachwitz and Pete Welding. Oak Publications/\$2.00

MUSIC IN THE CAJUN COUNTRY

Robert Johnson As I Knew Him

—By Johnny Shines—

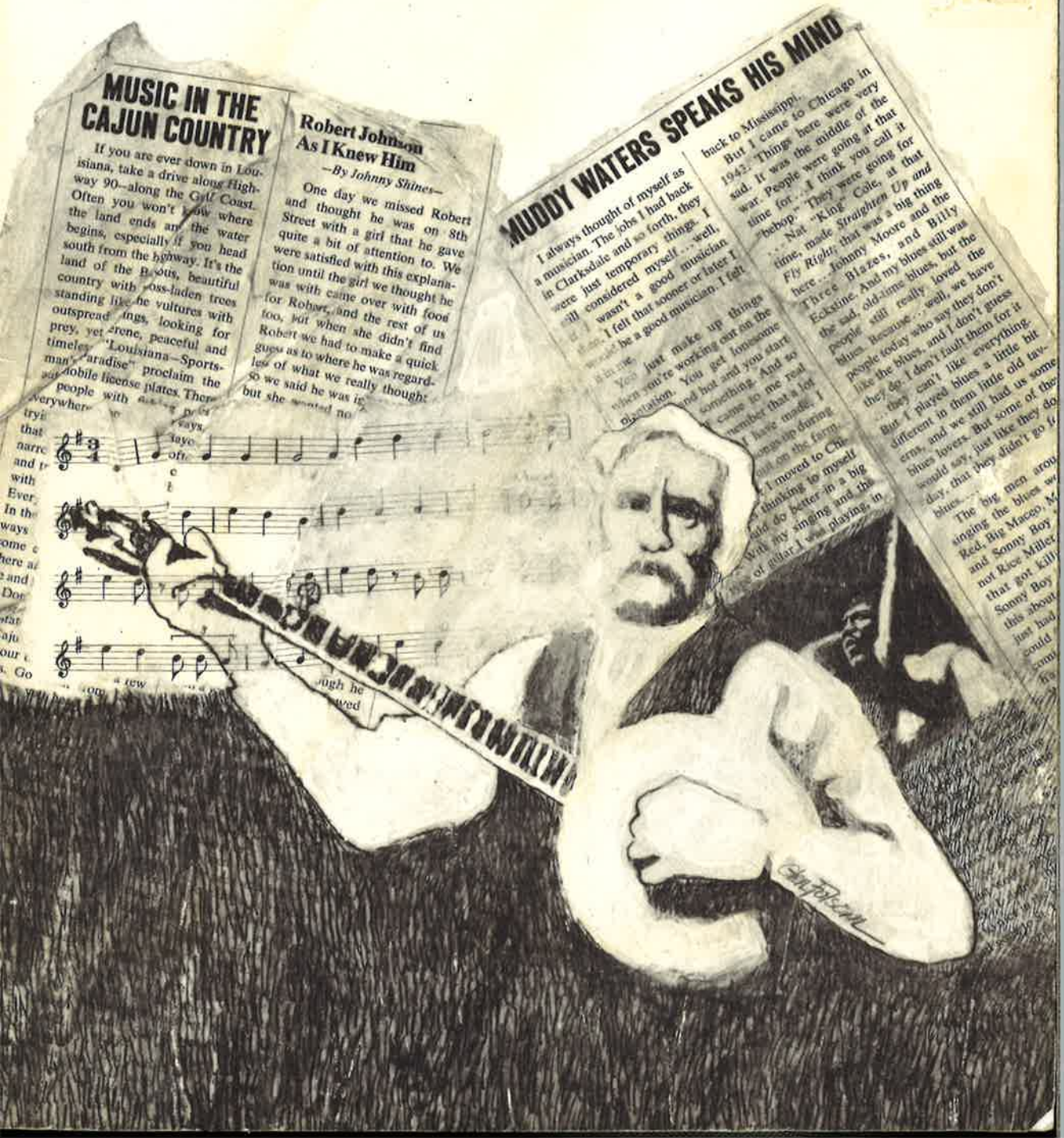
One day we missed Robert and thought he was on 8th Street with a girl that he gave quite a bit of attention to. We were satisfied with this explanation until the girl we thought he was with came over with food for Robert, and the rest of us too, but when she didn't find Robert we had to make a quick guess as to where he was regardless of what we really thought so we said he was in but she wanted no

MUDDY WATERS SPEAKS HIS MIND

I always thought of myself as a musician. The jobs I had back in Clarksdale and so forth they were just temporary things. I was considered myself... well, I wasn't a good musician then. I felt that sooner or later I would be a good musician. I felt

back to Mississippi. But I came to Chicago in 1942. Things here were very bad. It was the middle of the war. People were going at that time for... I think you call it "bebop." They were going for... Nat "King" Cole, at that time, made *Straighten Up and Fly Right*, that was a big thing here... Johnny Moore and the Three Blazers, and Billy Eckstine. And my blues still was the sad, old-time blues, but the people still really loved the blues. Because... well, we have blues today who say they don't like the blues, and I don't guess they do. I don't fault them for it. They can't like everything. But I played blues a little bit different in them little old taverns, and we still had some of the blues lovers. But some of them would say, just like they do today, that they didn't go for blues.

The big men were singing the blues. Muddy, Big Maceo, Red, Big Maceo, Sonny Boy, and Sonny Miller, that got killed. Sonny Boy, this about that had some



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Folk Music Occasional*

Compiled and Edited by
Chris Strachwitz and Pete Welding

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Introduction

A brief note of explanation: American Folk Music Occasional is edited by Chris Strachwitz and Pete Welding in the belief that there exists an intelligent and informed audience for America's folk musics, an audience that is interested deeply in the men and the forces that carry and shape those musics. It is our intention to report honestly and, we hope, perceptively on America's many and varied folksong traditions, the people among whom they are nourished and whose needs they serve, the forces which shape and act upon them.

We have no axes to grind, no special causes to plead. Our editorial premise is a simple one: We love the music and we wish to share with our readers the joy, beauty and excitement we and our contributors find in it. While the major focus of AFMO will naturally be on the larger areas of American folksong--the secular and religious music of the Southern highland and rural and urban Negro cultures--we will not neglect the numerous other folk musics that flourish in the U.S. We will report, as comprehensively as we can, on the folksong traditions of all the various ethnic and racial subcultures that we can: the extended coverage of the traditions of the Louisiana French-speaking Acadians and the report on the polka music of the large German community in Texas in this issue indicate both our concern with, and treatment of, these matters. One thing: we will not report on rock and other contemporary popular music forms (except as they relate to American folk music), in the belief that these musics are sufficiently covered elsewhere.

Our approach will, we hope, walk a fine line between the scholarly and the secular; we wish, in short, to be both informed and readable, solid yet lively, perceptive and--ideally--profound. And we do not intend to ever lose sight of the human behind the materials we document.

AFMO will deal with the past as well as the present. Traditions are, after all, living things and they change and die. A study of the past can tell us a great deal about the present, while an informed use of the present can illuminate the past for us. In our coverage of America's musics, we hope to use our knowledge of the here-and-now to help us understand the there-and-then. We'll try, at any rate.

And you can help us. With suggestions and criticism, with ideas, with encouragement, with corrections and additions, with photos and manuscripts. Especially with stories and articles. We welcome, solicit and will pay for any and all solid, authoritative writing on any and all aspects of American folk music. If you have any ideas you'd like us to consider (before going ahead with them), send them to us. Write either Chris Strachwitz, Box 9195, Berkeley, Calif. 94719, or Pete Welding, 577 Levering Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. 90024. (Be sure to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.)

Wish us luck. And help all you can. Write, tell your friends, subscribe. Whatever you can. Thanks.

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An Interview With **Muddy Waters**

BY PETE WELDING

"The pattern for the rediscovery by a largely white audience of a Negro blues singer," wrote Martin Williams, "was set in the 1930s when John and Alan Lomax found Leadbelly, and it continues today in the reappearances, in person and on records, of Big Joe Williams, Sleepy John Estes, Roosevelt Sykes, Mississippi John Hurt, and a dozen others. As young men, each singer had a following (semi-urban and more or less national) in person and on single, 78 rpm so-called 'race' records among American Negroes until he went out of fashion. Years later, white blues and folk enthusiasts seek him out and, if he is lucky, manage to renew his career on LP records and for quite different listeners.

"But the career of Muddy Waters has almost reversed the procedure. When Alan Lomax first recorded him for the Library of Congress folklore archives, he was known only to the locality of Rolling Fork, Mississippi. But a few years later Waters was an established postwar rhythm and blues recording artist with a couple of hits to his credit."

At 51, Chicago's soft-spoken Muddy Waters is recognized as one of the most forceful, individual singers of the country-gone-urban blues. For the last twenty years he has been an important member of the Chicago blues community, from the late 1940s a consistently successful recording artist. Following his early *Feel Like Goin' Home* and *Can't Be Satisfied*, issued in 1947 by Chicago's Chess record label, Waters has made a long string of recordings that have sold well in the fiercely competitive rhythm-and-blues market.

Born McKinley Morganfield in Rolling Fork, Miss., Waters is in a direct line of descent from the great blues singers of the oppressive Mississippi delta cotton farming area in which he was raised: powerful autobiographical singers like Charlie Patton, Son House, and Robert Johnson--singers who in the force and artistry of their singing and playing raised the relatively simple country blues form to extraordinarily high levels of expression.

Waters learned directly from House and, through him, the poetically gifted Johnson. In his earliest recordings, made for the Library of Congress in 1941 and '42, Waters revealed himself a master of the fierce, declamatory delta blues, the voice high and anguished, underlined by a fierce, insinuating, rhythmically complex guitar accompaniment.

He brought the style to Chicago in 1943 and, through his magnificent recordings of the late 1940s and early '50s, was largely responsible for introducing its force and intensity to the urban blues, evolving in the process one of the most emotionally potent approaches in the postwar blues. His recordings from those years possess an immediacy, force, lack of artifice, surging rhythm, and they provided a breath of freshness after the banalities and insipidities that stifled much of the blues of the war years. Waters' early commercial recordings were largely responsible for lending vitality and passion -- as well as direction -- to the then emerging rhythm-and-blues form.

In the years since, Waters' style has moved farther and farther from the strong, undilute country blues. Forced to keep pace with the rapidly changing demands of the popular record industry, he inevitably has changed the focus of his material. For the last few years the singer's single recordings often have found him in performance of trivial, contrived songs, quite removed from his early records like *Can't Be Satisfied*, *Just A Fool*, *Louisiana Blues*, *Hootchie Kootchie Man*, *Feel Like Goin' Home*, among numerous others. There has been, however, little diminution of his power or intensity in delivery: the manner is much the same; only the matter has changed.

In recent years, with their growth of interest in America's traditional folk music, Waters has found a new audience in the college auditoriums, concert platforms, festival stages, and coffee houses in which the folk music revival centers. He was among the earliest of contemporary blues singers to visit Europe (lately enjoying an unprecedented interest in American Negro folk music) and, since his first trip in 1958, has successfully toured England and the continent a number of times.

--P.W.

Drawing by Robert Billings



I was born in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, on April 4, 1915. I have now living three sisters and five brothers.

Though my daddy was a guitar player, I didn't learn to play from him. No, I learned from watching other people play. (I used to blow harmonica when I was first beginning in music.) I learned from Scott Bohanna, who was a guitar player in Clarksdale. I was born in Rolling Fork, but I was raised in Clarksdale; they're about a hundred miles apart, or a little better. Clarksdale wasn't too large then, not like it is today. It has grown from the time I was a kid. Right now it's a pretty large city...town, I would say—not city.

My daddy was a farmer then, but I was carried away at three years ... away from Rolling Fork by my grandmother. She took me with her ever since I was six months old. So, when she moved up to Clarksdale, that's where I lived.

I never did see my dad when I was living in Clarksdale. I didn't see him at all (then). I did see him, though, after I got to be very well known. He never played professionally. He played to little parties down there. You know how they have them country parties and things. He played for them parties and such, but otherwise I didn't get no lessons from my daddy at all.

A young guy who wanted to learn to play, he could go and see different people. It wasn't like it is here in Chicago; here you have to be old enough to get in a night club. It's different from back home, because we had those country ... what we called ... suppers. Then there were jook houses, which is what some people called them, taverns. Young kids ... boys and girls ... and older people; everybody went to those places. There wasn't no such thing as you couldn't get in.

My first instrument was harmonica. I was about 13. I always did want to play music. I guess I had it in me. I was messing around with the harmonica ever since I got large enough to say "Santy Claus, bring me a harp." That's what I'd tell my grandmother. I always wanted a harmonica and Santy Claus would bring me a harp and I would mess around with it. But I was 13 before I got a real good note out of it, before I started getting into the way of playing blues on harp. I started blowing and I learned how to blow a few things on that, and I got to be pretty good with that. No one showed me nothing; I got it myself.

You didn't hear such things as blues and things on the radio when I was a kid. And when a guy got a hit record then, he got the hit, because he didn't have no help. You had to go out and buy the records. Didn't hear it on the radio.

We had a phonograph at my grandmother's. I remember buying a few records with my little nickels. My grandmother didn't buy hardly anything but church songs. But I got hold of some records, and borrowed some, listened to them very, very carefully ... such as Blind Blake, Blind Boy Fuller, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Charlie Patton. That's before Robert Johnson's time ... he was about 1935 or someplace. I don't know when he recorded, but when I first heard him real good it was in 1937. He was still a very young man when he died. Now, Son House was an older man than Robert. I ran across Son House lots of times. Then I was just trying to begin to pick the guitar. And I liked that style. I used to use a bottleneck on the slide. Really, I think I'm closer to Robert than anybody that ever played.

I really liked Charlie Patton's playing and singing too. I used to could play a little bit of his stuff. He was a real clown with the guitar; he'd pat on the guitar, hit the guitar, he'd whirl it over his head....He was very good, though. You can hear on some of the records how he'd be patting on the strings. They even do it on electric guitars now.

I must have been around 17 when I got hold of a guitar. It was around 1932 when I commenced with the guitar, and then, instead of me blowing the harmonica, we had two guitars together, me and this particular guy Scott Bohanna. He was about a year or two older than me. He played pretty nice guitar, though he never did reach the big time. I got to be a better guitar player than he was...in a year's time I could beat him playing. Bottleneck style, most all the time. You see, I was digging Son House and Robert Johnson. I saw House in person and I did get to see Robert play a few times, but I was digging his records too. Because he used a very nice slide.

Today I tune to the chord, but at that time I was tuning it in Spanish (EADGBE). There was another tuning they would use—I guess they call it 'Vastopol'—that's open E. Open E Minor is very good too, but I never was too heavy in that. I was good with the Open E, and I was good on the Spanish too. Now those Library of Congress recordings—they was Spanish mostly, I think. It's been so long, I done forgot; but I'm sure it was Spanish tuning.

I got very good in a year's time. At first Bohanna was playing lead guitar, but after I learned to play so fast he just stayed in the background all the time. He played second guitar when I was playing guitar, but played lead guitar when I was blowing harmonica.

We played all around our little town. We played all the different things around...Saturday night

suppers and Sunday afternoon get-togethers, even played for white get-togethers, picnics and such. It was a cotton farming area, and working out on a farm, why, you don't have too many "cabaret nights." Saturday night is your big night.

I worked on the farms, I worked in the city, and I worked all around. This is at the time I was living with my grandmother. I wouldn't say I was supporting myself, but I worked.

I didn't get very much schooling. The school system wasn't too good and, number one, I didn't really have the time, I thought, in those days to be bothered with it. I didn't really know that you need schooling down through the years. It's one mistake I made. But the rest of it there was great.

I went to church every Sunday. As far as music, you get a heck of a sound from the church, I think. I think the best blues singers there are today -- even to myself -- they came from the church. I don't know whether I'm right or wrong, but I really think the best blues singers of today ... whoever's singing good blues ... they came from church. They were first church singers. You can name a whole bunch of people, Ray Charles, B.B. King, Dinah Washington -- all of them came out of the church. Now B.B. King used to be very good in his choir out of church; you can tell from the voice he's got he's from church. Bobby Blue Bland ... they all from the church.

The Library of Congress recordings, they were made on Stovall's plantation. I was working for Mr. Stovall. Alan Lomax, he was down talent scouting and, you know, Alan -- he's always been a fast man. He was a very young man at the time. So he came and found me. He must have ... he did hear someone tell I was a pretty good guitar player and could sing very, very good. He came out and found me and I spent the whole Saturday afternoon with him. And next year he came back. That must have been in 1941, and he came back in '42. He recorded a bunch of numbers ... a lot of them. He was just getting everything we had. I cut a whole lot of songs for him, but I think the Library of Congress only pressed those two (Country Blues and I Be's Troubled).

I always thought of myself as a musician. The jobs I had back in Clarksdale and so forth, they were just temporary things. I still considered myself ... well, if I wasn't a good musician then, I felt that sooner or later I would be a good musician. I felt it in me.

You just make up things when you're working out on the plantation. You get lonesome and tired and hot and you start to sing you something. And so all that stuff came to me real good, I can remember

that a lot of the records I have made, I first made those songs up during my work days out on the farm.

A little later I moved to Chicago. I was thinking to myself that I could do better in a big city. With my singing and the type of guitar I was playing, in my mind I thought I could do better. I could make more money and then I would have more opportunities to get into the big record field.

But, in the meantime, when Alan Lomax came down, I just couldn't see a big city. I told him I just would never go to a big city. I didn't think people lived so nice in the city. You see, I had gone to St. Louis in 1940; but it was unpleasant, so that's why I cut back. Just too tough. I was playing the old blues, and it wouldn't go there. So I went back to Mississippi.

But I came to Chicago in 1943. Things here were very sad. It was the middle of the war. People were going at that time for ... I think you call it "bebop." They were going for ... Nat "King" Cole, at that time, made Straighten Up and Fly Right; that was a big thing here ... Johnny Moore and the Three Blazes, and Billy Eckstine. And my blues still was the sad, old-time blues, but the people still really loved the blues. Because ... well, we have people today who say they don't like the blues, and I don't guess they do. I don't fault them for it ... they can't like everything. But I played blues a little bit different in them little old taverns, and we still had us some blues lovers. But some of them would say, just like they do today, that they didn't go for the blues....

The big men around town singing the blues were Tampa Red, Big Maceo, Memphis Slim and Sonny Boy Williamson ... not Rice Miller; I mean the one that got killed -- the original Sonny Boy it was. I would say this about him: like myself, he just had something that people could feel. And I think really -- coming down to blowing the harmonica -- I think Little Walter's about the best that's been on records. But Sonny Boy just had a curious voice; he had a sound that got to people. If you liked blues, you liked his. He had that blues sound, you know. He come up out of Tennessee, and he had that bluesy sound, and you couldn't take it from him. He had that particular little twinkle in the voice that got to people.

I worked on the West Side in a few taverns, and I played house parties in Chicago too. I worked for a while with pianist-singer Eddie Boyd. He was here when I came, and we is off-cousins, Eddie and myself. But he couldn't stand my playing because he wanted me to play like Johnny Moore, which I wasn't able to play the guitar like. He wanted it to be a kind of sweet blues. So then I

began to build up my own little thing. I got one guy named Little Smitty with me, a very nice kid, and we began to play around a little bit at these little unknown clubs, taverns. But we had our crowd with us because, as I say, I don't care what come out, there's gonna be somebody that likes blues.

I remember we played on Polk and Oregon Streets on the West Side. I think it was a tavern named David and Mason's after the two partners that owned it. And then we moved from there to 1806 West Roosevelt Road. We played there for a while. Later the tavern was sold and the Kings bought it, and we played for them too. We played at house parties, as I say. Later we played at Tom's Tavern; it was in the 1400 block on Roosevelt Road.

I worked a couple of times on Maxwell Street. Little Walter worked down there a lot of times. But I never worked on the street very much; just a couple of times. I remember that it wasn't any more than maybe two times I worked on the street, and they were because I was trying to push a record for Walter. He had made this record for, I think it was Maxwell Street Radio. I was down in front of the record shop ... went down there and tried to push his record. We sold a good bit that Saturday afternoon.

My first big record hit was made with just me and Big Crawford on bass, Feel Like Goin' Home and Can't Be Satisfied. (I did make an earlier record, Little Anna May and Gypsy Woman.) Then I got Baby-Face Leroy Foster with me. The two of

us were playing around, and after a while we brought Little Walter into the picture with us. He had his own band at that time. Then later we hired Jimmy Rodgers. I put Jimmy on guitar and Leroy on drums -- he could play either drums or guitar. There were four of us, and that's when we began hitting heavy.

The Aristocrat Record people had a guy with them by the name of Goldberg, I think it was, who was their talent scout. He heard me sing and he said, "This is it." At the time Leonard Chess had a lady for a partner in Aristocrat. Chess didn't like my style of singing; he wondered who was going to buy that. The lady said, "You'd be surprised who'd buy that." He was dead down on our material. Finally, though, he let me make a record in September or October of 1946, and it was released in 1947, somewhere in May.

Everybody else's records came out before mine. Andrew Tibbs had two records out before mine, Union Man Blues and something else (Bilbo Is Dead). But when they released mine and it hit the ceiling, then Chess began to come close to me. Changed his tune, because I was selling so fast they couldn't press them fast enough at that particular time. Then he began to get close to me, because Andrew Tibbs had done failed.

After the record hit, I was building the group with Walter, Jimmy Rodgers, Baby Face Leroy and myself, but still I had to go down there and record with just Big Crawford and myself. Chess wouldn't upset things; he wouldn't mess with the harp or the extra guitar. He wanted to keep the

combination that had made the hit record ... just Big Crawford's bass and my guitar. It was amplified, but I was playing old style blues. I started playing amplified guitar when I came to Chicago. Everybody else was playing them and I had to get something to go with that too. When I came to Chicago I brought a plain guitar. Today I still like the plain guitar better than I do the amplified one -- better sound, everything. But if everybody's using them, what you gonna do?

After my records broke they were sending me out by myself on tours, but I didn't think that was quite right. I wanted to take the group I had been working with, and after a while it got so that I could. We traveled through Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and I guess that I've been most over the States and out. We were playing for what we call jook houses, little Saturday night things, dances and so forth.

What it was that made our records different... we would set down and we kept that Mississippi sound. We didn't do it exactly like the older fellows -- just with no beat to it. We put the beat with it ... put a little drive to it. It's like, I would say, when Blind Lemon Jefferson was making records: back then they changed whenever they get ready. We went to putting time with the stuff. I think Tampa Red, Big Maceo and them -- they were very "timed-up" people too. We went to putting time to our lowdown Mississippi blues.

We put a pretty good group together because we learned the beat, learned what the people's moving off of. Even if it's the blues, we still had to drive behind it.

That's what makes the blues so good. When you know your blues, if you try to put direct-time -- like you would do in pop music -- I don't think blues will sell so good. You know some of my records maybe have thirteen bars, like the record I sing, Just to Be with You. I don't know myself how many bars we do. You don't count it out; you feel it.

I think now that everybody is trying to play something that, even if there're people dancing slow, they got a ... they can feel it with the beat. But at the time I recorded for Alan Lomax, well, you used to take up a guitar and you sit down and play for a house of people without any electric. They danced, but they didn't have all this crazy dancing they have now, the Monkey and the Bird, and all that different stuff. It was two-step waltz, Charleston, Black Bottom, and the slow dance that's always been.

I think the blues and popular music are getting closer together. Nowadays an old guy like Wash-



Photo by Ray Flerlage

board Sam couldn't make it today, because his day has been here and gone. And the blues have to change, because the people're changing so fast nowadays. They're learning all new ideas, and if you are a blues singer you have to be right now in this business.

Young Negro kids now, they're so used to what they hear on the radio, they just turn away from the old blues. Now, last night I played a lot of my old songs; well, I got a very nice hand for them, but still I could feel that the young kids don't feel that reaction, that movement. It's not the music of today; it's the music of yesterday.

Is it good for the blues to change like this? I don't think so. I really think that the blues, the real blues, is just what I was doing when I made my first recordings. Back in that time, that's the real blues. Lots of things I make now are commercial.

I think this worldwide interest in the blues is a very good thing. The field I stand in now -- it's very good for me. I'm not bragging, but I stand almost worldwide now. I've been overseas three times now; everybody over there began to like me very much, especially in England. I introduced the electric guitar over there. At first they didn't know what to think, but now they accept it.

The college audiences that I play to here--they want me to be a deep blues singer. That's what they want me to do, not play this commercial stuff. They want my old yesterday stuff.

As far as what I'll do after I can't perform any more, I've been thinking of trying to get me a club of my own.

MUDDY WATERS LP DISCOGRAPHY

Muddy Waters may be heard on the following LP recordings, all currently in print: Afro-American Blues and Game Songs, Library of Congress AAFS 14 (contains two magnificent performances, Country Blues and I Be's Troubled, recorded at Stovall's Plantation in 1941); Muddy Waters--Down on Stovall's Plantation, Testament T-2210 (a recent release that brings together 13 of the 14 selections recorded for the Library of Congress in 1941 and '42, including the two items in the aforementioned Library of Congress album, and four numbers by the Son Sims Four, a rough, raw back-country string band of which Waters was a member); The Best of Muddy Waters, Chess 1427 (the title is accurate, as this disc contains an even dozen of Waters' finest early commercial achievements); Sings Big Bill, Chess 1444 (the singer in a program of songs associated with the late Big Bill Broonzy that is only intermittently effective); Muddy Waters at Newport, Chess 1449 (a live, generally satisfactory program by the Waters band at the Newport Jazz Festival); Muddy

Waters--Folk Singer, Chess 1483 (a disappointing album in which Waters attempts to recreate his once powerful performance style of some 18 or 19 years ago), and Muddy Waters--Folk Blues, Chess 1501 (a fine set that offers excellent, representative performances from his early and middle recording career in Chicago). Waters is present in a number of blues anthology sets assembled by Chess, but inasmuch as the material contained in them has been culled for the most part from the above albums, one might reasonably pass them up. Festival of the Blues, Argo 4031, an uneven set recorded at the Copa Cabana Club in Chicago, offers some passable Waters performances too, this time supported by the Buddy Guy band. Under the nom de disque "Dirty Rivers," Waters appears as sideman in an album, The Blues Never Die, Prestige 7391, under the leadership of his pianist Otis Spann. Waters most recent Chess LPs include Brass and the Blues, Chess 1507, one of his more expendable efforts, and More Folk Blues, Chess 15, a fine collection of a number of his older sides.

THE WORLD of CAJUN MUSIC

THE CAJUNS OF LOUISIANA

By Paul Tate

Although Cajun music has been known and enjoyed by a small portion of those interested in folk music, very little in the way of systematic collection or scholarly study of Cajun music has been undertaken. This is not to say that what work in this area that has been done by folklorists and musicologists is not highly competent and valuable; it must be stated, however, that far too little attention has been paid Cajun music.

Cajun music often has been confused with general Louisiana folk music which reflects much Negro, French and Spanish influences and which is sung in the near unintelligible patois of the plantations. This however, is in no way Acadian.

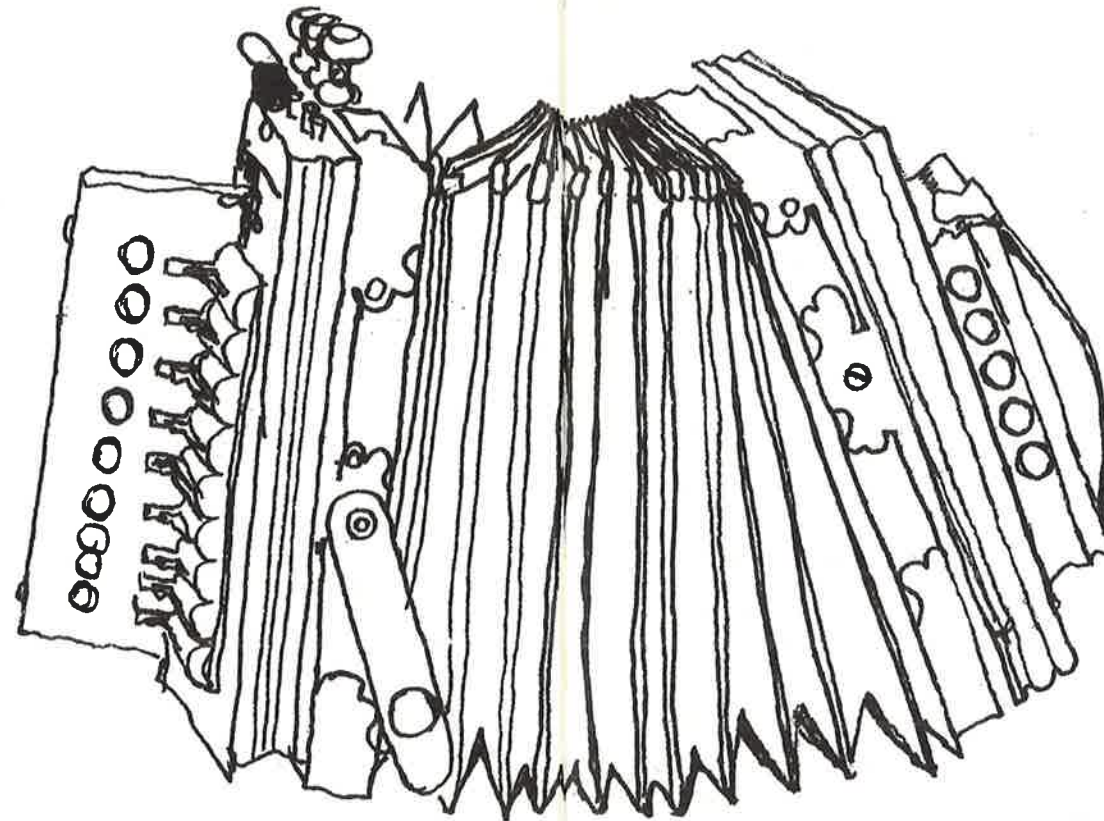
No competent ethnological or sociological study of the Acadian community in Louisiana ever has been made; such a study, combined with the history of the Acadians as a people, would be of immense assistance in defining, distinguishing and analyzing Cajun music.

Before proceeding further, it should be understood that the word "Cajun" is not a derogatory word. The Acadians call themselves "Cajuns." The word results from the natural evolution of a spoken language. (Early maps show Acadia both as "Acadie" and "Cadie." Therefore, the people would be "Acadien" or "Cadien," as we are Texans, Louisianians or Mississippians.) The "d" sound followed by "i," when spoken rapidly, produces a "j" sound. We have other examples of this in Acadian French: "Dieu," meaning God, is pronounced "Jeu"; "diable," meaning devil, is pronounced "jable," and so on. Analogous in English are "could you," "would you" and "did you," pronounced respectively "couju," "wouju" and "diju."

In the Acadian French word "Cadien," the "di" became "j" and would be pronounced "Cajen," but for further evolution of the "e" sound, which was brought out as a nasalized sound between "i" (as in "fin") and "u" (as in "brun"). In Acadian French the word is therefore somewhere between "Cajin" and "Cajun," and a person recording the word in French from the sound might accurately transcribe it either way. Of course, in writing the word phonetically in English, the closest form is "Cajun" because of the long "a" in the accented first syllable and the "u" or "i" sound in the unaccented last syllable.

To understand how Cajun music could and did develop as a distinct and unique tradition, it is well to have some idea of the people among whom the music developed.

The full history of the Acadians is a tragic saga that is far too long to be detailed here. Suffice it to



Drawings by Sammy Nobles

soldiers for "Indian" scalps, murdered those not captured. The Acadians were brought to the English colonies on the Atlantic seaboard of America as wards or prisoners of the English king. Some were turned back by the colonists and transported to England whence, after a period of imprisonment, they made their way back to the northern coast of France. There they remained, foreigners in their native land, until resettled in Louisiana by the Spanish. Of those who landed on the American seaboard, some made their way to French Canada; some, relatively few, remained in the colonies; some few returned to Acadia, while most made their way to New France, as Louisiana was then known.

The Acadians arrived in Louisiana tired, poor, quaintly dressed in their native clothing, speaking a French barely known in Louisiana, to be met by a Spanish governor whose treasury was all but bare. Besides their great need and sorrow, they brought with them the dreaded smallpox. It is little wonder, then, that Governor O'Riley found it necessary to issue a public statement justifying his permitting the Acadians to unload.

As the Acadians landed along the rivers and bayous, they were given directions to reach the Opelousas country and the Atakapa Indian country where unclaimed lands lay in abundance. The Acadians settled, and occupy today, the major portion of south Louisiana below the 32nd parallel.

Because the Acadian sought in Louisiana not a new life so much as the old life in a new location, he escaped the disintegrating effects of the "melting pot" by which most immigrants were more or less quickly reduced to the common denominator of the mass American culture. Unable or unwilling to accommodate himself to external cultural standards being imposed upon him, the Acadian either withdrew humbly and silently into himself or noisily joined the opposition in denouncing everything Acadian.

It is impossible to give here a complete description of the many facets of Acadian culture that might be of interest to readers. However, two of these aspects should be discussed if for no other

say that the Acadians developed as a distinct ethnic group from 1605 to 1755 in the Maritime Provinces off the east coast of Canada; the best known of these currently is Nova Scotia. The Acadians lived in Acadia in a nearly classless society which was based on a quasi-feudal social system in which the royal lord had been replaced by the head of the family; its justification for being was defined--if that is the proper word--by the Catholic church. The Acadians lived in peace, maintained their neutrality in the conflicts between France and England and between French Canada and the British American colonies, and were known as "neutres" or neutrals. In 1755, the British forces in America, in order to take possession of the Acadian territory they had been ceded by the French under the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713, imprisoned and evacuated all the Acadians they could capture, burned their homes and crops to starve out those who might have escaped and, by offering a bounty to their

reason than they are the most obvious ones, most often attracting the attention of people from other cultures, and are perhaps the ones in greatest need of clarification: the language and the music of the Acadians.

We hear it said, sometimes in derision, that the Acadians in Louisiana do not speak French, but speak instead a patois, meaning a deteriorated or debased French dialect. There is, of course, no basis in fact for this statement; scholarly studies have shown it to be completely unfair.

There are three types of French spoken in Louisiana: Creole French, Acadian French and Negro French dialect. Again, space will not permit the distinguishing of these well-marked types, so a brief discussion of Acadian French will have to suffice.

The French language brought to the early Acadian colony, nurtured and developed there, and later brought to Louisiana was the French of the farms, hamlets and seaports of Normandy, Touraine and Berry in northern France of the 16th and early 17th century. Acadian French is the vigorous, rustic language of the farmer and fisherman transmitted from generation to generation--not the academic, classical French of Versailles and court circles. The French language of France and the Creole French of the New World colonies were fashioned by the Royal Academy of France, founded in 1633 and composed of forty members, sophisticated and scholarly gentlemen, dedicated to the purification and standardization of the language of France. In 1694 the dictionary of the Royal Academy was published. This book, as is true of any dictionary, could not possibly codify all the words used in all the provinces of France. Each province had its own peculiar vocabulary, differing widely from those of the others. The dictionary compilers had to choose from these various vocabularies what would therefrom be "proper" French; all other words were rejected.

It is a matter of record that many words were omitted from the dictionary (and hence left out of this "proper" French) because of their rusticity. It also is of record that, in the choice of words to be included, the Academy followed the standard practices of the Royal Court of Louis XIV where, of course, only persons of quality, high birth and nobility were admitted. Following the publication of the dictionary, the only French permitted to be taught in French schools was the proper French authenticated by the Royal Academy.

Obviously the Acadians, who had been gone from France almost a hundred years at the time

of the dictionary's publication, were not influenced at all by the arbitrary choices of the academy. Even in France the introduction of this standardized, "proper" French was resisted strenuously and there survives a saying current at the time that "pour parler Francais, il faut parler Vaugelas" (Vaugelas was in charge of the preparation of the dictionary). To this day in France, in fact, the dictionary vocabulary has not reached the entire population and in many provinces the people have ignored the dictionary and Vaugelas, continuing to speak the French their forebears spoke: in Normandy, Touraine and Berry a French very much like Acadian French is spoken yet.

Of course, a language transmitted orally from generation to generation must undergo some change and variation. This is especially true when loss of interest and pride in the language is fostered by the expedient of prohibiting its being spoken by children on public school grounds, or by uninformed statements--made by the relatively better-educated classes, Acadians and others--that Acadian French is but a low-class patois.

Lest it be inferred that the reference is to some relatively rare Acadian French preserved by a few holdouts, let it be noted that the Acadian French of which we speak is by far the most prevalent French spoken in Louisiana--the language spoken, in fact, by educated and uneducated Cajuns alike. No French-speaking Acadian of Louisiana need apologize for the language he speaks, for the language he speaks can be, and is, well understood wherever French is spoken--in France and in the major cultural centers of the world.

As is true of folk music generally, Cajun folk music reflects the character, hopes, aspirations and the way of life of the Acadians of Louisiana. Although many Acadians settled elsewhere, only in Louisiana did they settle in sufficient numbers and concentration to have theirs become the area's dominant cultural traditions--for a time and, in some places, to this day. The Cajuns never were a minority in the areas where Acadian culture is found today; they were, in fact, a great majority and their dominance is attested by many family names such as McCauley, McGee, O'Connor, Israel, Martin, Richard, Reed, Tate and others, many of whose bearers spoke no English until the present generation.

Here, then, is where we find Cajun music.

The music played by Cajuns in most dancehalls, road-houses, on radio and television today in the Cajun country is the result of one or two generations' influence from Country-and-Western or

hillbilly music, which has been overlaid on the traditional music of the area. This is particularly obvious in the "modern" use of electric and Hawaiian guitars, bass fiddles, drums and even brass and reed instruments to supplement the traditional Cajun instrumentation of French accordion, violin and the triangle, or "ti fer."

To understand the problems of the musicologist or collector of traditional Cajun music today, one must understand that traditional Cajun music has suffered the fate of the Cajun language, Cajun traditions and the whole Cajun way of life. Cajun music, like other Cajun cultural elements, has been overwhelmed by the 20th century American economic, social, educational and communications explosion in Louisiana.

As a result of this, traditional Acadian music played on traditional Cajun instruments had lost all semblance of status. It lay captive, isolated and dying, hedged in by a subtradition of mediocre imitation of country-and-western or popular music whose advocates held themselves aloof from the traditional Cajun musician, who--his simple traditional instruments drowned out and outclassed by the electric guitar, bass fiddle, drum and brass horn and deserted by the current "hip," acculturated Cajun generation--was forced to either join in the new noise or sullenly bow out.

Except for a very recent revival of interest in the traditional Cajun musical styles evidenced in

the field work of men such as Alan Lomax, Harry Oster, Ralph Rinzler, Chris Strachwitz, Bob Yellin, John Cohen, Bob Jones and others, totaling less than a dozen, Cajun music was well on its way to oblivion.

The reader will recognize these names as nationally-known personalities and non-Cajuns. These courageous men had some inside help, notably from Revon J. Reed, a science teacher and part-time radio personality who has promoted traditional Cajun music, virtually alone for the last ten years, on a two-hour radio program originating in Mamou, deep in the Cajun country.

This writer is neither a musicologist, ethnologist, sociologist, psychologist, historian nor a Cajun scholar--but only a Cajun, a lawyer by profession, who refuses to join with those who would denounce the Cajun culture. It is hoped that the present interest in Acadian culture, including the interest in our beautiful, happy and often moving Cajun music, will forestall further alienation of the last and preceding Cajun generations.

There are several recording companies in Louisiana engaged in the production of Cajun music records, but since our prime interest here is in the renaissance of traditional Cajun music, it should be stated that much that is released by these commercial record firms, while undoubtedly "authentic," admittedly is not traditional. The "authentic" Cajun music recorded today by con-

(l. to r.) Revon Reed at the controls; Paul Tate; Ambrose Thibodeaux, triangle; Cyprien Landreneau, fiddle, Mamou, La.

Photo by Chris Strachwitz



temporary artists is very interesting and contains much of the flavor of traditional Cajun music. However, for the connoisseur who might like to compare the current "popular" Cajun music with its traditional antecedents, this writer would recommend the 1964 Newport Folk Festival recordings by the Cajun group, the various Harry Oster collections, and the Arhoolie recordings of material made around Mamou, La.

Much work is left to be done by musicologists and related scientists to bring into focus the Cajun traditional music as influenced by other traditions. Many of our old "traditional" songs drew from other traditions. For example, one of our earliest recorded Cajun songs was La Potate Chaude (or "Ou test partie mon bon vieux marie") which is known to have existed in other parts of the U.S. (Kentucky perhaps?) as My Good Old Man.

This writer, in perusing American Folk Music Occasional, No. 1, 1964, read with interest Playing the Dozens (pp. 73-86), by Roger D. Abrahams, a most interesting and scholarly article, and was astounded to find what appears to be the origin of a "traditional" Cajun song recorded some thirty years ago. The song contains the following verse:

Ta maman 'semble á un 'tomobile,
Ton papa 'semble á un elephant,
Ta 'tit soeur 'semble á un wa wa ron,
Et ton 'tit frere 'semble á un coin d'banquet.

This is translated as:

Your mother resembles (is like) an automobile
Your father is like an elephant,
Your sister is like a bullfrog,
And your brother is like a sidewalk corner.

Undoubtedly some Cajun was "playing the dozens" in song. Extensive inquiry among older Cajuns has failed to uncover any memory of the origin or meaning of these "nonsensical" words, however.

A similar old song in the Cajun repertoire is Ta Vole Mon Traineau. This possibly was dozens-playing but using "traineau" (drag-sled--a phrase with many connotations) instead of "Studebaker" (Abrahams, p. 80) or "cake" and "railroad track" (ibid, p. 81), and so on.

Future studies of Cajun music should be most revealing and rewarding. It should be emphasized, however, that the discovery in Cajun music of borrowings or assimilations from other musical traditions, while interesting and significant from musicological and sociological standpoints, in no way detracts from the existential fact of a distinctly Cajun music tradition. Too, it must be remembered that although Acadian music is principally

dance music, the lyrics, or words, though not standardized, reflect beautifully the life, hopes, aspirations and history of the Acadians. The Acadian repertoire portrays the entire range of human emotions: love of the home, family and mother, love between the sexes, and human weaknesses and virtues, all depicted against a backdrop of tragedy, joy, sorrow and humor.

We find the open and forthright expression of the love of a man for his mother in Cher Mom, the sufferings of a lover for his sweetheart in songs such as Grand Mamou, the sorrow of lovers separated in death in J'ai Passe Devant Ta Porte, the sowing of wild oats by a young man in La Valse de Prairie Ronde, and the revolt of the young generation against established customs and morality in Colinda. There also are such subtle double-meaning songs as Ta Vole Mon Traineau (You Stole My Drag-Sled) and Ton 'Ti-Moulin (Your Little Mill), and downright bawdy songs such as Le 'ti Toro a Grand Pene (The Little Bull with a Long Penis).

Traditional Cajun music was included on the program of the Newport Folk Festival in Rhode Island in 1964 and 1965. Sarah Gertrude Knott, directress of the National Folk Festival has included traditional Cajun music in each national program since 1957, including that held at St. Petersburg, Fla., in 1966. Too, traditional Cajun music was included in the program of the Gulf Coast Festival held at Mobile, Ala., in 1964. All of the musicians who performed on these programs were selected from the Mamou area.

Undoubtedly there are many questions left unanswered in the reader's mind about the Cajun and his music, as there is much of the Cajun's emotions, feelings and ennui inexpressible in the printed word. One has but to travel to Mamou (it can be found on any Louisiana road map) or any town nearby to be received cordially by a real Cajun who can play traditional Cajun music or who can introduce the guest to a Cajun neighbor who can.

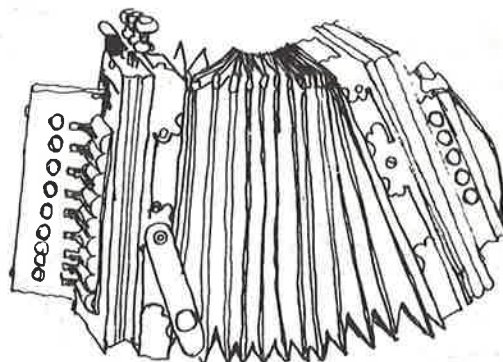


Photo by Chris Strachwitz



The Hackberry Ramblers: (l. to r.) Lennis Sonnier, guitar; Edwin Duhon, accordion; Luderin Darbone, fiddle.

CAJUN COUNTRY

By Chris A. Strachwitz

If you are ever down in Louisiana, take a drive along Highway 90--along the Gulf Coast. Often you won't know where the land ends and the water begins, especially if you head south from the highway. It's the land of the Bayous, beautiful country with moss-laden trees standing like the vultures with outspread wings, looking for prey, yet serene, peaceful and timeless. "Louisiana--Sportsman's Paradise" proclaim the automobile license plates. There are people with fishing poles everywhere along the highways, trying their luck in the Bayou that runs parallel to the often narrow road. You stop at a cafe and try some of their Gumbo--with lots of rice and fish in it. Every place has its own recipe. In the fields bordering the highways grow sugar cane, rice, some corn; a bit farther north there are great numbers of cattle and hogs.

Don't just race across the country at 75 miles an hour on interstate 10, which now splits the Cajun country in two, but take your time and make a few detours. Go south from Lake Charles

as you head East and take highway 14 towards Kaplan and Abbeville, and then go north on road 13 through Crowley to Eunice and Mamou, over to Ville Platte and on down to Lafayette. You are in Cajun Country! If I had to show someone the area on a map I would indicate Port Arthur and Orange, Texas, in the west to New Iberia in the east as the base of a triangle with Mamou or Ville Platte as the peak. The names of the towns are often used as titles for one-steps, waltzes or two-steps: Hackberry Trot, Hathaway Two-Step, Basile Waltz, Church Point Breakdown, Hayes Polka, Mermentau Stomp, and so on. The list is long and the records are often rare and very hard to find, but the people are friendly and hard-working. Their history is unique.

No doubt, most of you have heard Jambalaya by Hank Williams, or perhaps the songs Big Mamou or Jole Blond. These are all Cajun songs that were quite popular throughout the country not many years ago, though usually in English-language versions by various popular or country-and-western singers. However, it all started down in Louisiana, where almost any night, especially Wednesdays and weekends, except during the Lenten season, you can hear the strange but haunting sounds of a Cajun band in any one of hundreds of roadhouses, dancehalls, and beer joints along the highways and byways of Southwest Louisiana.

One hot summer night in 1960 I came through this part of the country for the first time. I had heard a few Cajun music numbers on the fine folk music anthology LPs put together by Harry Smith for Folkways Records, but I was skeptical of finding this sort of thing still going on and at a bar in Lafayette I heard only a band trying to imitate Fats Domino. But I did hear some of the people speak a curious dialect and I finally asked the waitress if there were any places where I might hear some of the old Cajun music. She was a bit startled, but happily told me about an experience of a few weeks earlier when she and her boyfriend had got pretty loaded and wound up at a roadhouse on the highway to Breau Bridge. All she could recall was that the band consisted of a bunch of old men playing fiddles, accordion, and even a triangle! I decided to give it a try even though it was a different night of the week.

The road led towards Teche Bayou and as it kept on raining there seemed to be water all around. The night air was still warm and humid and crickets were chirping at full volume when I pulled into the muddy parking lot. But the discomfort of the weather was soon dispelled by the weird sounds of amplified accordion, electric fiddle, a crying steel guitar, plus a solid, pounding rhythm section as I walked in. I got a beer and watched the dancers. They were mostly older people, shuffling across the floor, talking and shouting their approval to the band. The band was playing on and on, mostly waltzes and two-steps. Suddenly I remember, they were doing It Wasn't God Who Made Honky-Tonk Angels, sometimes known as The Wild Side of Life, one of my favorite hill-billy numbers. It had started out in Cajun--the accordion player was singing--but after about six verses the fiddler started to sing in English. They went on with this number for at least 20 minutes. The audience knew this was their music: these were their problems the singers were bemoaning. The beat was a bit modern but the sound was unmistakably from the Bayous. This was today's Cajun music. No outsider could duplicate this music, and no one could take it from them.

The band was Aldus Roger and his Lafayette Playboys. He had just returned from Washington, D.C., where he had taken part in a festival of some kind--no one could recall just what it was. But it was far away and exciting, and through it Roger had gained some temporary publicity and national acclaim. But his home was here and these were his people; they were really the only ones in the country who mattered to him, his neighbors, friends, and some of the fans who may have watched him over KLFY-TV on one of his weekly Saturday morning TV shows on Lafayette's channel 10. I went next door to get something to eat, again rice and gumbo. I knew I had arrived in Louisiana

and I was enjoying it.

It all started way back in the early part of the 17th century (as Dr. Harry Oster points out in his informative notes to the LP, Cajun Music, Prestige 25015), when French settlers who had been living in Acadia, Canada, refused to take an unrestricted oath of allegiance to the British who had taken the area from the French in 1713. The conflict that ensued reached a climax in 1755, when the Acadians were ordered to depart the country and leave all their land and livestock to the British. During the next eleven years more than 8000 Acadians were shipped off, mostly to New England and, later, New York, Charleston and Savannah. Half of them died at sea from various diseases and the rest found a cold welcome wherever they landed. Being Catholics, they faced laws prohibiting their settling in some states. Many pushed on towards Louisiana, hoping to eventually join other Frenchmen. In 1756, the first group reached Louisiana; the French and Spaniards there helped them settle in the Southwest part of the Territory, where they have remained ever since, living in relative isolation until the 1930s.

During that decade new roads were built in Louisiana at a rapid rate, oil was becoming a major industry, and outsiders were moving in to take the skilled jobs. Radio, the phonograph, the movies, juke boxes and, more recently, television made their impact felt on the people and their culture. Old customs and traditions deteriorated and the public schools in their ever "progressive" urge to make us all speak, act and think alike even prohibited the speaking of French on the school premises.

But all is not lost today. The schools are once more offering French as part of the foreign language program and, since the second World War in particular, Cajun music has enjoyed an almost unprecedented popularity. There is considerable evidence that the Cajun people still are very proud of their background and cherish the old traditions.

But the mass media and the Coca Cola culture have taken their toll, especially among the younger generation, who prefer the latest "Top 40" rock-and-roll hits and attend school dances instead of the old-fashioned Fais Do Dos, weekly all-night dances where everyone, old and young, would take part--eat, drink, dance and make merry. Most teenagers of Cajun background still understand the colorful old dialect their parents speak but few of the younger generation can speak Cajun themselves.

Some of the old people still sing and play in a style that must be as old as the Acadian culture itself. Most of the middle-aged Cajuns however

prefer a hybrid style--combining elements from Acadian music, jazz, country-and-western, blues, and especially Western Swing--to which they can dance. The lyrics are usually in French but often are translations of pop songs.

During the late 1920s, when the major record companies discovered that various regional styles of American folk music could be sold back to the "folk" living there, the first recordings of Cajun music were made. To many record collectors, the name Joseph (Joe) Falcon has become synonymous with Acadian music. Actually, there were many other fine musicians at that time who might have made comparable records but it was one of those instances where Falcon was at the right place at the right time.

Joseph Falcon was born Sept 28, 1900, about 3-1/2 miles north of Rayne, La., and died in Crowley in 1966. His father had played accordion and his brothers and sisters also played music--Cajun music. Joseph Falcon learned his tunes and songs from many sources, mostly from people in the Rayne area like Sidney Babineaux, a near-legency Negro accordion player. In 1928, Falcon and a number of his friends were talking in a pool hall and someone made the suggestion that Joe ought to make some records. So it was that George Burrow, a jewelry store owner in Rayne, persuaded Falcon to go to New Orleans with him to make some records to be sold in Burrow's Rayne store.

"We went over there," Falcon recalled "They looked at us--we was but two, just myself and my wife Clemo Breau, she played the guitar--but they were used to recording with big orchestras. 'That's not enough music to make a record,' they said. So George had 250 records paid for before I even went to make them. So George started talking; 'We got to run it through because that man there,' he said, pointing to me, 'is popular in Rayne; the people are crazy about his music and they want the records.' But they said, 'We don't know if it's going to sell.' Then they turned around and asked him, 'How much would you buy?' He told them he wanted 500 copies as the first order. 'Ah,' they said, '500! when are you gonna get through selling that?' 'That's my worry,' he said. 'I want 500.' And he made out a check for 500 records. They started looking at each other. 'Well,' they said, 'you go ahead and play us a tune just for us to hear.' They was all in those stiff collars with coats on and everything--you know, high falutin'. So I took out the accordion--and it was a big building, but it was closed--and that thing was sounding like it wanted to take the roof off! When I played that number, they started talking to each other. 'Lord, but that's more music out of two instruments than we ever heard in our lives,' they said. 'We don't understand nothing but it's

a sweet sound; we are gonna try it.'

"And I made it! When the record came out, they were right back looking for me. That first record was Alons A Lafayette backed with The Waltz That Carried Me to My Grave. That was the first Cajun French record that ever was recorded. Among your own people if somebody does something that sounds good and everything, well, that's your people and so, of course, you want to get one. Even some of the poorest country fellows, they buy as high as two records. They ain't had no Victrola, but they buy and go to the neighbor's and play it!"

And so Falcon made the first Cajun records. Later that same year he was called to New York to record again, and other trips to Atlanta and San Antonio followed. He was always accompanied by his wife, who played guitar and also sang, and at times by his brother-in-law Ophy Breau would join them to play rhythm guitar. Falcon couldn't recall any Cajun ballads and the only topical song he remembered was Audrey, about the 1957 hurricane that did much damage along the Louisiana coast.

On the whole, making a record was apparently much the same to a Cajun musician as it was to a blues singer. The Cajun would take an old tune or theme and deliberately change it or improvise new words to it. "The number was there but I had to make up the words," Falcon explained, "Like Osson--it was the name of a little town, but you just have to find a name to put on the record. It's an old two-step."

Like other country musicians, Falcon played at dances, Cajun gatherings, picnics and other events. The usual instrumental combination was accordion, fiddle, and perhaps a triangle. "In those days," Falcon recalled, "accordions would cost maybe between \$14 and \$16--new ones--but today the cost is between \$140 and \$175, and you have a hard time buying them." Sidney Brown in Lake Charles specializes in repairing accordions and is also one of the few people in Louisiana who builds them. This includes making an electric pick-up for the amplifier, for today this has to be part of any accordion.

During the 1930s a number of groups began using amplifiers on their instruments, among them the Hackberry Ramblers, causing quite a commotion due to the novelty of it. Over the years, the sound of Cajun music has changed and many of the oldtimers inevitably have felt left out if they didn't change their style or modernize their band. For a time during the late '30s Falcon played drums in a string band and only occasionally would do one of the accordion pieces for which

he had won so much acclaim in the '20s. The '30s were very lean years for Cajun music, with most of the good musicians having to turn to other jobs for a living.

When I spoke with Falcon in 1962, he was quite active for his age. He had returned to music after World War II but soon became disenchanted with the record business. "I recorded quite a while," he recalled, "until I got disgusted. So many of them recorded the same type of music, and they do it for hardly nothing--it got me disgusted. They came back many times to make me record again but I said no." He had realized that, with amplifiers, etc., most of the groups tended to sound alike, and although Falcon continued to be one of the best accordion players, he also realized that in order to sell records his group would have to sound like the others and he apparently did not understand that Cajun music was a very regional music and, therefore, would offer relatively little financial rewards as far as record sales were concerned. The quantity of Cajun records that were made is amazing when one considers the size of the region and the comparatively small audience. Especially since World War II, the output of both 78-rpm and, more recently, 45-rpm discs has been fantastic.

The band which Falcon had the week I saw him consisted of his wife Theresa on drums and vocals, Lionel LeLeux on fiddle, H. Miers on guitar, and Falcon of course on accordion. At times, he told me, he would add a steel guitarist, as has become the fashion in many beer halls.

During the 1930s, with the growing popularity of Hillbilly or Western music, especially Western Swing, and with the introduction of the steel or Hawaiian guitar, many Cajun bands turned into string bands, eliminating accordion. The most popular recording group of this period was the Hackberry Ramblers, which employed fiddle as lead instrument. This alone was a novelty and the group's music caught on.

Luderin Darbone had learned to play fiddle from a mail-order instruction book while still in high school and in 1931, when his family moved to Hackberry, he met Edwin Duhon, who already knew some Cajun tunes. Duhon was learning to play the accordion and could already play guitar and bass. Soon they were joined by Lennis Sonnier, who had a remarkable, joyful, shouting voice. He played lead guitar, knew all sorts of Cajun numbers, and could really holler. They soon were broadcasting on the radio in Lake Charles and began to play dances on weekends. They were young, enthusiastic, and brought new musical elements into their music, including jazz and blues. A Negro band used to come every other

weekend from New Orleans to play at a local dance hall and the three Cajun musicians went to listen. They learned tunes like Careless Love, Trouble in Mind, Eh La Bas, High Society and Tiger Rag.

In 1935 they made their first records for Bluebird in New Orleans with Eli Oberstein supervising and passing out the cash at the end. They continued to record for many years. In order to reach a wider audience they made records as the Riverside Ramblers in the late '30s, playing Western music and with Joe Werner as featured vocalist, they even had a hit, Wondering. The Hackberry Ramblers continue to play together today and although they have changed their style a bit to keep up with changing tastes and dance steps and actually play very little Cajun music today at their dances, the group is a good example of three unique and very individualistic musicians adapting material which they heard around them and creating their own unique hybrid style.

When World War II ended and independent record labels began to spring up all over the country, it wasn't long before a happy-go-lucky erratic, fun loving country fiddler named Harry Choates walked into the studio of the newly-formed Gold Star record company in Houston, Texas. His band, consisting of fiddle, steel guitar, banjo, piano, guitar, bass and drums, had that Western Swing sound which was the rage in the Southwest. But it had something special--the Cajun sound as well. The band recorded the old favorite, Jole Blond, with Harry doing the vocal in Cajun, and this became an overnight hit all over the Gulf Coast region.

Little is known about Choates, but the story has it that he was born of German-Bohemian background and completely adopted the Cajun language and traditions. He lived fast and carefree and almost everyone who knew him liked him. Bill Quinn, who recorded most of his records between 1948 and 1951, always chuckles when talking about Choates and apparently liked him, as did most people who knew him. Choates apparently would not record unless the studio was full of people, as he loved to play for an audience. Born in 1923, Choates died on July 17, 1951, in the Austin, Texas, jail where he had been held on charges of wife desertion. Rumors surround his end, but no official statement was apparently ever given as to the exact causes of his death.

Though Choates is dead, he gave Cajun music a new lease on life. Many of the old-timers started playing again when people demanded Jole Blond at the dances, and it was heard on every juke box. Not only those who had recorded in the past--like Joe Falcon--but many new names

Photo by Chris Strachwitz



Cajun accordionist Nathan Abshire

appeared on the scene and found their way to recording studios. In addition to Bill Quinn's Gold Star label, there was Eddie Shuler with Goldband Records in Lake Charles; next door was Khoury with his name on the label of his records; a bit further east in Crowley was J. D. Miller, who operated a number of labels including Fais Do Do, Zynn, and Kajun; in Ville Platte, Floyd Soileau started Jin and Swallow Records; and over in Lafayette, Carol Rachou began his La Louisianne label. Today Khoury has gone over to rock-and-roll but most of the others are still producing Cajun records.

There are, and were, at least dozens more labels that recorded some Cajun music. Many of them have folded and others have sprung up to produce 45-rpm records for the small but apparently solid Cajun market. Many of the labels have in recent years also brought out LPs, usually collections of various 45 releases, but Folkways, Folk Lyric, Prestige, and Arhoolie Records have made special efforts to preserve the older styles and to bring this music to a world-wide audience.

Today the music of the Cajuns is still going strong in the beer joints and dance halls where amplifiers and drums prevail, but the older style is slowly disappearing into the homes and at private parties, where it can still be heard by those interested enough to search out the old timers--those who don't play for a living but who enjoy getting together with their neighbors and

friends for an old-time supper.

Only a few non-musicians take an active interest in keeping the old music alive. Paul Tate, a lawyer, and Revon Reed, a school teacher and part-time radio personality, are two who have done much to promote "traditional" Cajun music in contrast to "authentic" Cajun Music, a distinction Tate likes to make. They have taken groups to the Newport Folk Festival; Reed has traveled all over Europe with the Landreneau group as part of the 1966 Festival of American Country Music sponsored by Horst Lippmann and Fritz Rau. Every Saturday morning Reed's radio show is broadcast "live" from the French Casino in Mamou and features mostly traditional performers in between his commercials, which are of course read in French! No doubt there are other people who like to see the old music continue and even younger musicians, like Jerry Devalier and the members of the Cajun Trio, enjoy the older music.

As we know from the development of jazz and the blues, it seems foolish to attempt to keep a certain musical style alive artificially, but then there exists a respect for, and sympathy with, the traditions and folkways among the people who have handed this music down, and when they receive some encouragement and attention, then I am sure the music will live on for a good many years even if some people in Louisiana would like to have one believe that Cajun music never existed!

THE LOUISIANA ACADIANS

By Harry Oster

The dramatic and tragic Acadian story begins when the first French colony in the New World was established in Acadia (modern Nova Scotia) in 1604 by settlers from provinces of northern France--Brittany, Normandy, and Picardy.

During Queen Anne's War the English won control of Acadia. According to the Treaty of Utrecht of April 13, 1713, the Acadians were to enjoy the free exercise of their religion, the choice either to remain in the country, keeping the ownership of all they possessed, or to leave the country, taking away with them all their movable goods and also the proceeds of the sale of their movable property.¹

Despite the apparent freedom of the choice the British granted the French colonists, the governors were actually quite reluctant to permit the Acadians to settle in any other part of Canada, for they feared the influx of a substantial number of Acadians into another part of the country would create a concentration of Frenchmen potentially dangerous to British rule. Also, the British needed for their garrisons the fish, cattle, corn, and wheat the Acadians provided.

In 1714 the British rulers took a sterner stand in their official demands; they insisted that either the Acadians "take an unrestricted oath of allegiance to the British crown or leave Acadia without taking their possessions."² Although the Acadians refused to take an unrestricted oath, the English did not begin to dig their claws into the settlers until General Phillips came from Annapolis in 1720 to take over as governor. Almost at once Phillips ordered the settlers to "take the oath of allegiance without any reservations or to leave the country within four months without being able either to sell their possessions or to transport them."³ When the Acadians took him at his word and began arranging for their departure, Phillips expressed his annoyance at their refusal to take the oath by doing everything he could to prevent their leaving. The sentiments of his administration are amply clear in a letter Craggs, his Secretary of State, wrote him:

My dear Phillips:

I see you do not get the better of the Acadians as you expected....It is singular

all the same that these people should have preferred to lose their goods rather than be exposed to fight against their brethren. This sentimentality is stupid. These people are evidently too much attached to their fellowmen and to their religion to make true Englishmen....The Treaty be hanged! Don't bother about justice and other baubles.... Their departure will doubtless increase the power of France; it must not be so; they must eventually be transported to some other place, where mingling with our subjects, they will soon lose their language, their religion, and their remembrance of the past, to become true Englishmen.⁴

Although Phillips finally accepted a restricted oath of allegiance which would exempt the Acadians from bearing arms against their own countrymen and Indian allies, the British government, when it was expedient to do so, declared the oath invalid on the technicality that Parliament had not given its consent.

In the French and Indian War, which began in 1747, the English and French once more locked horns in another of their innumerable wars. Lawrence, the governor of Acadia at that time, plotted secretly to exile the Acadians from Canada and to expropriate their rich lands. Since the British had brought over twenty-five hundred settlers from England in 1748 and established the city of Halifax, the government decided that the Acadians had outlived their usefulness to the empire. Lawrence insisted that the inhabitants of Grand Pré take an unqualified oath of allegiance to the English crown, swearing loyalty forever to England and agreeing to bear arms against her enemies.

When most of the Acadians refused, Lawrence summoned the men of Grand Pré to the village church on September 5, 1755. There Lawrence's aide, Winslow read them their cruel fate, "That your lands and Tenements; cattle of all kinds and Live Stock of all Sorts are Forfeited to the Crown with all your Effects, Saving your money and Household goods; and yourselves to be removed from his province."⁵ Winslow then put the assembled four hundred and eighteen men of Grand Pré and vicinity under arrest.

Five days later the young men, the most likely source of rebellion, were forced onto the five transports then available.

As the two hundred and fifty young men were lined up between files of soldiers with fixed bayonets, the scene of grief that followed is almost indescribable. Every evidence of grief and excitement became

manifest--cries of anger, tears, and pleading for mercy, stubborn refusal to march, calling of father to son and son to father, of brother to brother....A great many people from the village lined the road to the landing place, a distance of a mile and a half away, and as the young men moved down the road between the files of soldiers, praying, crying, singing, many of the assembled people fell on their knees and prayed or followed with wailing and lamentation.⁶

As soon as the other Acadians had been driven from their farms, Winslow ordered the buildings burned to the ground, often before the eyes of their agonized owners.

During the next eleven years the British continued to deport Acadians, more than eight thousand of them, four thousand of whom died at sea of smallpox and other diseases. The surviving exiles were scattered widely, at first to New Haven, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Hampton Roads, Charleston, and Savannah--usually without advance notice to the governors. Almost everywhere their reception was cold; the Governor of Virginia sheltered them through the winter, but sent them to England in the spring. Philadelphia received them reluctantly, and Governor Reynolds of Georgia banished them as soon as they arrived because of a statute which forbade the settling of Catholics. Since almost everywhere the pathetic exiles found themselves unwanted, most of them pushed on to Louisiana, hoping to join other Frenchmen.

When the first group reached Louisiana in 1756, the French and Spanish welcomed them and helped them settle in the southwest of the state. During the late eighteenth century some of the exiles found their way to Prairie Mamou, a vast stretch of flatlands and bayous, extending from the banks of the Atchafalaya to the lowlands of the Mermen-tau River.

After the French revolution and the slave insurrection in Santo Domingo, there was an influx of French-speaking people. There were also early settlers of Anglo-Saxon descent, Irishmen from Spain, where they had fled to escape British persecution, and Spaniards by way of Mexico.

Paradoxically, the familiar American phenomenon of the melting pot produced a community which was French in speech and culture.

Mr. C. C. Duson, who owned many acres of good farm land, laid out the town site of Mamou in 1907. Advertisements appeared in the Opelousas papers to find customers for his lots. One of the advertisements read:

Go west, young man, go west
Go west, and go to Mamou.⁷

Mamou, it is amusing to note, is twenty-five miles west of Opelousas.

The town was incorporated on January 11, 1907, by proclamation of the governor. "The charter granted by this proclamation provided for a

Abbeville, La. (Russell Lee, Farm Security Administration Photo)



governing body composed of a mayor and three aldermen--which 'could enact ordinances and laws for the welfare of the village,' including 'securing the general health of the municipality by the removal of open privies and cesspools and to suppress hog pens within the corporate limits.'"⁸

In 1911 the town had 250 population, in 1920, 603; in 1930, 800; 1940, 1379; and currently about 2,500. "Grand" Mamou is big in comparison with "Tit" Mamou, a neighboring farming community which has a population of about 2,000.

Mamou depends primarily on an agricultural economy for its livelihood; rice and cotton farmers from the surrounding countryside come in to do their shopping. They also keep busy the three cotton gins and the two rice dryers in the town. In addition there is a small petroleum refinery.

Because of isolation from the rest of the world and because of pride in their French heritage, descendants of the Acadians and those assimilated by them have retained a fundamentally French culture for most of their long stay in a dominantly English-speaking nation.

During the past thirty years, however, the strength of the French influence has been waning because of a variety of forces. When the public schools came into general existence, many of them forbade the speaking of French on the premises. The purpose was to force the children to speak English. The widespread building of roads during the nineteen thirties brought the community into more easy contact with the forces of Americanization. The rise of the phonograph, radio, motion pictures, and most recently television has had the double effect of changing the tastes of this traditional people in the direction of conformity and substituting mass produced, homogeneous entertainment for the old folk dances and songs. In addition, the return of veterans of World War II after years elsewhere, the discovery of oil on many farms in south-west Louisiana, industrialization and the consequent influx of executives and workers from other states are upsetting the ancient ways which were so traditionally a part of an agricultural way of life.

The changes which have taken place in the Cajuns' (the colloquial shortening of "Acadiens") choice of music constitute an interesting example of acculturation, in this case the modification of a minority culture as a result of the influences of a majority culture. Since Mamou, like other French towns in southwest Louisiana, is in a highly transitional state, one can still find music representing three important stages of development. The music now being performed includes (1) the folk music of seventeenth and eighteenth century France, still

circulating in relatively pure form; (2) hybrid folksongs, which combine lyrics in Cajun French with elements from one or more outside sources, (southern mountain folksongs, Tin Pan Alley hits, country-and-western music, which includes cowboy and hill-billy, and Negro jazz), and (3) current popular music.

For the most part those who sing songs in the direct French tradition are among the older members of the community, those over sixty, grandparents and great-grandparents, many of whom learned these songs from their parents before the phonograph came into wide use in the state. Some of these oldsters speak only French. Their children, ranging in age from about twenty-five to fifty, generally speak both French and English; the music they like the best is hybrid. Today's youngsters often speak English and only understand French; the songs they sing and the tunes they dance to are identical with the commercial popular music of the rest of the United States.

One of the attractive features of folk life which still survives, though in a somewhat modified form, is the big Saturday all-night dance, the fais dodo, so called perhaps because mothers sing fais dodos (lullabies) to put to sleep the babies, who are brought along to the dance with all the other members of the family.

A traveller in the 1870's wrote about a fais-dodo he visited:

The neighborhood ball is orderly and well conducted, with whole families attending. A section known as the parc aux petits is provided for the babies so that mothers can keep a careful watch on their older daughters, while the fathers enjoy a quiet game of cards in an adjoining room. The old women also come to play cards, each carrying with her a bag of coins. Some of the mothers are quite young to be relegated to places against the walls; and, as they follow the dance with sparkling eyes, they perhaps hum under their breath, half humorously, half sadly snatches from the old Acadian ditty:

'Dansez, mes enfants, tandis que vous etes jeunes
Bientot arrivera que me fille me fera grand'mere
Au lieu de danser la gavotte, dans un grand fauteuil on radotte.'

'Dance, my children, while you are young
Soon my daughter will make me a grandmother
Instead of dancing the gavotte,
one gossips idly in a big armchair.'



Louisiana bayou country (Russell Lee, Farm Security Administration Photo)

During the evening a supper of chicken gumbo with rice and hot black coffee is served. When the musicians at length grow weary, they go outside and, firing pistol shots into the air, cry "Le bal est fini!" Otherwise, the dance-loving Acadians would never go home.¹¹

Although, as this quotation suggests, in the nineteenth century married women seldom danced, even when they were quite young, today young wives need no longer look on wistfully from the sidelines. While the dances seldom run all night now, there is still plenty of hilarity and exuberance expressed in wild whooping and rhythmic stamping of feet as the dancers gyrate through the current favorites, the two-step, the waltz, and a Cajun form of jitterbugging. The dancers drink their whiskey directly from a fifth with no nonsense about branch water to weaken their bourbon.

The traditional instruments are the Cajun accordion (an instrument usually made in Germany, which has only two chords, the tonic and dominant, and can play in only one key), the fiddle, the now rare triangle or spoons, more recently the guitar,

and sometimes the harmonica.

1. Edouard Richard, Acadia, Missing Links of a Lost Chapter, New York, 1895, I, p. 75.
2. Our Acadian Heritage, Louisiana State Department of Education, 1955, p. 6.
3. Ibid.
4. Richard, p. 124.
5. Harry Lewis Griffin, A Brief History of the Acadians, Grand Coteau, p. 14.
6. Ibid., pp. 15-16.
7. Opelousas Courier, Aug. 23, 1907.
8. Robert Gahn, "History of Evangeline Parish," unpublished master's thesis, Louisiana State University, 1941, p. 51.
9. Louisiana Writers' Project, Louisiana, A Guide to the State, New York, 1941, p. 93.

ZYDECO MUSIC-i.e., FRENCH BLUES

By Chris Strachwitz

Unlike the Mississippi Delta region or the piney woods of east central Texas, Louisiana is not particularly famous for its blues style, primarily because most of the collectors, researchers and folklorists--that is, the taste-makers who determine what styles are to be considered "important"--are for the most part interested only in the past. In the case of the blues, this means the 1920s, when the first authentic rural singers were recorded. But if you were to travel around the country asking people what music is important to them, I am sure you would get quite different answers than you would from the folklorists.

In southwest Louisiana, for example, most people probably would mention the names of either Hank Williams, Joe Falcon or Iry LeJune. Among the area's Negro population there undoubtedly would be a few who could recall the days when Bessie Smith toured the South or who remember Blind Lemon Jefferson's records. But these would be the exceptions, for back in the 1920s southwest Louisiana was deeply steeped in the French Acadian traditions; outsiders who had moved into the area had adopted almost without exception the folkways of the dominant Acadian culture.

With the advent of industry, rapid transportation and mass communications, life in Louisiana inevitably changed. But, as in most agricultural communities, change was slow in coming--even among those who had left the farms for industrial jobs in Houston, Port Arthur or on the West Coast. So it was not until the late 1930s, the '40s or perhaps the early '50s that a unique brand of blues developed along the Gulf Coast. Some call it "French music," others refer to it as "La La music" and many just say "Zydeco." No matter what the name, however, it refers to the dance music of the French-speaking Negroes of southwest Louisiana.

In tracing the history of Zydeco music one must look primarily at the evolution and development of Acadian (or "Cajun") music in general. The history of this development is discussed in greater detail in the several other articles in this section of AFMO. Here I would like to limit myself to a few remarks about the role of the Negro in

Louisiana, inasmuch as the development of Zydeco is inextricably linked to the Negro's position in southwest Louisiana.

Unlike the eastern part of the state, where the economy of large cotton plantations along the Mississippi River made slaves a valuable commodity, there apparently were few if any slaves in the Acadian country, although Negro workers found their way into the region in large numbers, particularly following the Civil War. For the most part, those Negroes who came soon adopted the ways and language of the Acadian community (as did, in fact, most other people who moved into the area), eventually coming to think of themselves as "French." In addition to the Acadians there were a good many Indians and Spaniards in southwest Louisiana when it first was settled during the middle of the 18th century. Prior to the Civil War a group of Negroes generally referred to as "Gens Libres de Couleur" (that is, free men of color) had settled and many had gained considerable wealth in the eastern and northern parts of the state, some of them even owning slaves.

The music of the upper-class Acadians was quite distinct from that of the lower classes. The wealthy landowners preferred brass band music--marches and quadrilles--or salon orchestras that performed polite waltzes and popular compositions. On the other hand, the lower classes always had preferred one-steps, two-steps and rhythmic waltzes played on the accordion. This popular accordion music has survived, but since the 1920s the orchestras have completely disappeared. Some older Negro musicians with whom I have talked remember well the days of the brass bands and orchestras; many of them have played in these bands. However, this music has gone the way of New Orleans jazz and is no longer heard at dances and outings.

The traditional Acadian instrument always had been the "French" accordion (usually manufactured in Germany, by the way), often accompanied by a fiddle as a second or back-up instrument and by the triangle--or "iron"--to furnish rhythm. In the 1920s the guitar was introduced, as hillbilly music became popular via records and radio. Today white Cajun bands employ accordion, fiddle, steel guitar and bass--all amplified--and drums, an instrumentation that scarcely is distinguishable from most Nashville C&W bands.

The first recordings by a Negro-French performer from the Cajun country apparently were made by Amade Ardoin (his name is spelled a number of ways since he probably was illiterate and recording directors doubtless used various phonetic spellings when annotating his sessions). Listening to some of Ardoin's recordings, I never would have guessed he was Negro and, since he

often was recorded in company with the white Acadian fiddler Dennis McGhee, I had assumed that Ardoin was a white Acadian as well. It was not until Clifton Chenier told me that Ardoin "was the first colored man to play the accordion" (on record, at least) that I was made aware of the true situation. Ardoin recorded for the Brunswick and Bluebird labels until the middle 1930s. He apparently was the only Negro accordion player to record until the 1940s, when Moses Asch, in the course of extensive recording of Leadbelly, waxed and eventually issued a few selections with concertina accompaniment. Since Leadbelly had spent a good deal of time in Louisiana and was no doubt familiar with the musical traditions there, these are important documentary recordings in the development of Zydeco music.

After World War II, when a vast number of small record labels sprang up all over the country, a number of them located in Texas and Louisiana recorded the typical music of the area and, although most Negro performers interested in making records were by that time already strongly oriented towards rhythm-and-blues, several interesting Zydeco items were recorded. Some of these recordings document the use of the term itself:

Now at the church bazaar or the baseball game,
The French La La--well, it's all the same,
You want to have fun, you got to go
Way out the country to the Zydeco,
Then let the Bon Ton Roulet. . .

This verse, from Clarence Garlow's recording of Bon Ton Roulet, is one of the most interesting Zydeco recordings of the early postwar period (it has been reissued on Arhoolie F-1009, Zydeco), becoming a regional hit. The song was recorded for various labels, but only the first two versions include this important verse. (A third recording of the song omitted this reference to the Zydeco.)

The term Zydeco apparently comes from the French phrase "L'Haricots"--that is, snapbeans in English--but more specifically it comes from the title of an old one-step, L'Haricots et Pas Sale (in English: Snap-Beans, Not Salty). Today the term Zydeco has taken on a much broader meaning than that, however. Like the Cajun term "Fais Do Do," it refers to a country party with food, drink, dancing and music, with the entire community participating. (When one speaks of a community anywhere in the South, it must be remembered that this usually refers to an ethnic group of a certain social stratum, since social segregation had, of course, become as firmly entrenched in Louisiana as in other parts of the deep South.) The term Zydeco was first spelled in this phonetic manner by Houston

Photo by Pete Welding



Zydeco musicians Cleveland and Clifton Chenier

folklorist Mack McCormick, and I am sure this spelling will in time become the accepted one, since the French spelling would hardly invite the correct pronunciation from most Americans.

About this time, the late 1940s, Texas bluesman Lightning Hopkins was beginning to gain popularity in and around Houston; since he invariably commented on almost anything that interested or impressed him he inevitably recorded a reference to the fast-growing influence of Zydeco by trying on one of his records to imitate on electric organ the sound of Zydeco accordion. Bill Quinn, who was recording Lightning extensively for Gold Star Records at this time, recalls that during the course of a session one day Lightning decided to try out an organ that was in the recording studio. After the number had been recorded, Quinn asked Lightning for the title. However, Quinn, not being too aware of the music of the local subcultures, had never heard the term Zydeco before, so the record bore the title Zolo Go (Recently reissued on Arhoolie Records.)

A few years later a Los Angeles record talent scout, Mr. Fulbright, a tall, light-skinned Negro, toured the South and recorded Clifton Chenier, a Negro Cajun accordionist and singer who was gaining popularity in the Lake Charles area. These were the first recorded examples of the full, mature blending of Acadian music with the blues, since the instrumentation used by the earlier-recorded Clarence Garlow was in rhythm-and-blues style. Chenier's music was, on the other hand, lowdown blues played on accordion with rhythm accompaniment and sung in English with

a heavy Cajun accent. Today Chenier remains the best and most popular exponent of Zydeco along the Gulf Coast. His records continue to sell well in this region, strongly influencing even older musicians as well as many young ones, including many white Cajun performers--such as Aldus Rogers, who recently recorded the old song Zydeco et Pas Sale exactly as it had been recorded by Chenier (Arhoolie F-1024).

There are many other exponents of this music, with Sidney Babineaux of Rayne, La., being one of the oldest I have met and talked with. In his younger days he had influenced the style of the important Joseph Falcon and, with his brothers, Babineaux led a band in Rayne in the 1920s.

As the acculturation of southwest Louisiana entered high gear in the 1940s with the building of roads and the development of the oil industry, and as increasing numbers of southern whites moved into the Cajun country, I suspect that the Negroes of "French" background opposed the new influences from the larger American culture much more strenuously than did white Cajuns, primarily because the increase in "Southern" influence brought a concomitant increase in racial discrimination and community frictions. As far as I can determine, discrimination was very little in evidence in the Bayou Country's earlier days. I further tend to believe that the French Negroes wanted little to do with other Negroes who came into the area, as the older settlers take great pride in their unique cultural background.

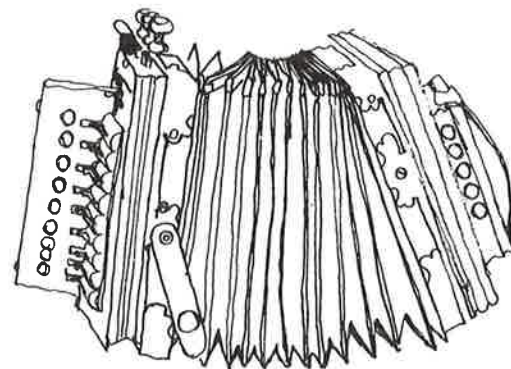
During World War II many rural French Negroes moved to Houston, Port Arthur, Galveston and other Texas cities because the booming war industry, oil refineries and ship-building centers offered greater financial rewards than did farm work in Louisiana. Even those whose families owned land in Louisiana moved to the cities because mechanization required fewer and fewer hands in the operation of the farms. The people who left their homes in Louisiana tended to be clannish, settling in those parts of the cities where their predecessors and friends already had established French communities; a section of Houston still is known among Negroes as French Town. These people of Afro-Acadian-Indian background are almost without exception handsome, friendly and carry on the traditions of their Louisiana upbringing. The Texas Zydeco musicians play, not for much money, but mainly for the entertainment and acclaim of their friends and neighbors who comprise the audiences at the local beer joints and dancehalls.

The Zydecos out in the country largely have disappeared, much as have country suppers all over the South, but occasionally one hears about

them and the kind of music that was played. One hears about the accordion, fiddles, guitars, and perhaps even a broom that was dragged across the wooden floor to produce a bass-like sound. In the cities, as in the rural areas, one can still hear a good deal of Zydeco music; as recently as a few years ago, for example, there were at least five beer joints in Houston that had Zydeco music on Sunday afternoons. Many of the musicians seemed to move from club to club--much like Mexican mariachi groups do--and during the afternoon it was possible to sit in one club sipping a cool beer and hear most of the better exponents of Zydeco in the Houston area. Audiences mainly are segregated. Clifton Chenier plays primarily for Negro dances, though often there will be white Cajuns in the audience. On the other hand, Nathan Abshire often plays in Negro clubs, at times using a Negro rhythm section to back him up, but someone like Happy Fats, with his C&W style, seems to appeal only to white audiences, and mostly non-Cajuns at that.

Zydeco is still very much alive today; Clifton Chenier, for example, is playing more than ever and largely has returned to Cajun-based material, in contrast to his attempts during the 1950s to make it as a rhythm-and-blues performer.

Like all folk music, Zydeco is in constant flux but the change and evolution take place within a strong traditional continuum that gives every newcomer a good foundation on which to build his own personal style. This is American folk music, one of many regional styles and forms, which today brings pleasure not only to the performers and their regional audiences, but to everyone--by means of the phonograph record, by a visit to Louisiana, or through appearances by the artists at concerts, on festival stages and in clubs and coffee houses all over the country.



CAJUN MUSIC ON LP-A SURVEY

Compiled and reviewed by Chris Strachwitz.

Folksongs of the Louisiana Acadians, Folk-Lyric LP A-4; collected by Harry Oster. Chuck Guillory--Grand Texas; Wallace Reed--Colinda; Mrs. Guillory--Tu Peux Cognier Mais Tu Peux Pas Rentrer; Mrs. Rodney Fruge--La Patate Chaude; Wallace Reed--Je Charche Tout Partout and T'es Petite, Mais T'es Mignonne; Cyprien Landreneau--La Danse De La Limonade; Isom Fontenot--La Betaille Dans Le T'it Arbre, Contredanse Francaise, Saute Crapaud, Cadet Roussel and J'ai Traverse La Mer Et Les Montagnes; Savy Augustine--Grand Mamou; Bee Deshotels--Y Avait Boitine Boiteuse, Aux Natchitoches, L'arbre Est Dans Ces Feuilles, La Danse De Mardi Gras and Mes Souliers Sont Rouges; Shelby Vidrine--Contredanse de Mamou.

This LP is the definitive collection of Cajun music; it includes samples of music representing its earliest days and the present, all recorded in Mamou. The notes are very detailed and include full texts, making it a masterful production in every way. The first side is given over to musical styles of the 19th century and after, while the second concentrates on those of the 18th century and earlier. (Recently reissued on Arhoolie Records.)

Cajun Folk Music, Prestige International 25015 (this LP has been deleted but is still obtainable at many stores); collected by Harry Oster. Austin Pitre, Milton Molitor and Lurlin LeJeune--Chars Joues Roses, Iota Two-Step, Le Blues Elton, La Danse Mardi Gras, The Marriage March, Ninety-Nine Year Waltz, Breakdown, Chare Mom, Molitor Waltz, The Prison Song, Maxie Waltz and Contredanse.

An attractive session of typical Cajun music played on non-amplified instruments in the traditional style.

French Music and Folk Songs of Le Sud De La Louisianne, La Louisianne 103. Alex Brussard, Lawrence Walker, Sleepy Hoffpauir, Happy Fats, Doc Guidry, and others--Le Sud De La Louisianne, Reno Waltz, Cajun Polka, L'Anne De Secont Set, Mamou Two-Step, The Orphan Waltz, Les Veuve De La Coulee, Crowley Two-Step, Chere Alice, Allons A Lafayette, Bayou La Fourche, Jolie Blon.

A pleasant anthology album that features Cajun fiddling rather than the more usual accordion play-

ing, in styles that are for the most part representative of a middle-ground between the old and the new.

Jole Blon, "D" Records LP-7000. Harry Choates and his fiddle--Jole Blon, Dragging the Bow, Allons A Lafayette, Poor Hobo, Port Arthur Waltz, Tondelay, Louisiana, Basile Waltz, Opelousas Waltz, Honky Tonk Boogie.

One of the important figures in the evolution of Cajun music, Choates' best-selling recording of Jole Blon in the years after World War II started the main revival of Cajun music. Choates was responsible for introducing Western-Swing elements to the traditional Cajun styles, this giving the music a broader appeal. This is the only LP available by this significant artist and contains samples of most of his best numbers.

The Hackberry Ramblers, Arhoolie LP-5003. Luderin Darbone, fiddle; Lennis Sonnier, guitar, vocals; Edwin Duhon, drums--Black Bayou Rag, Louisiana Waltz, Je Veux Marier, Fais Pas Ca, Crowley Waltz, Step It Fast, Ville Platte Waltz, J'ai Passe, French Harp Stomp, Jolie Blonde, Colinda, Cajun Rag, Te Petite, Te Meon, Mermentau Stomp, Cajun Twist, Madame Sustin, Turtle Tail.

A recent recording by a well-known group that was started in the 1930s and which was the first string band to mix Cajun music with country or hillbilly music. Material ranges from re-creations of their early recordings to contemporary items with steel guitar and drums. One of the best cross-sections on LP. Darbone, a unique fiddler, gives the group a very distinctive sound.

Cajun Classics, Cajun Classics LP-1001 (this LP may already be out of print but is worth looking for). Terry Clement--Te Maurice, Diggy Liggy Lo, Sugar Bee and Teen-Age Rock; Nathan Abshire--La Valse De Jole Fille and La Banana Au Nonc Adam; Aldus Roger--Oson Two-Step and Family Waltz; Robert Bertrand--Caroline, Caroline and Prison Waltz; Louis Alleman--The Car Keeps Rolling and Te Petite, Te Meon.

This album offers a good selection of typical contemporary music as it might be heard in Cajun dancehalls. The groups' instrumentation includes electric steel guitars, drums, and so on.

American French Music from the Bayous of Louisiana, Goldband LP-7738. Cleveland Cro-

chet--La Valse De Chagrin; LeRoy Broussard--Cafe Chaud and La Valse De Poor Boy; Iry LeJune--Durald Waltz; J.B. Fusilier--Think of Me and Too Young to Marry; Sidney Brown--Sha Ba Ba and La Valse De Love Lane; Jimmie Stewart--Short Two-Step; Kinus Touchet--Clover Club Special and New Love Bridge Waltz.

A good collection of contemporary-styled groups, plus some working in the older traditions.

Iry LeJune Originals, Goldband LP-7740. Went to the Dance, La Valse Du Grand Chemin, Church-point Breakdown, Come and Get Me, Lacassin Special, Convict Waltz, Don't Get Married, It Happened to Me, Parting Waltz.

LeJune was one of the finest accordion players in the history of Cajun music, but the poor recording quality and the unusually short playing time (even for Cajun LP standards) do not serve his music as well as could be wished. A far more satisfactory set by this artist is the following one.

Iry LeJune, The Greatest, Goldband LP-7741. Grande Nuit Special, Durald Waltz, La Branche De Muriee, Jolie Catin, La Valse De Cajun, Bayou Chene Waltz, Temone, Teche Special, Calcasieu Waltz, Love Bridge Waltz, Evangeline Special.

This LP by the same artist is by far the better set; you get more for your money, for one thing, and some of these performances are real gems by any standards.

The Great Shorty LeBlanc, Goldband LP-7742. With Jay Stutes and his Sugar Bees, Sugar Bee, Drunkard's Dream, My Little Cabbage, Time and Time Again, Three Year Waltz, Rambler's Lonely Dream, Forgot I Was Married, La Valse de Chagrin, Boss Cajun, Tears of Sorrow, Kaw-Liga, Soldier's Waltz.

A rather dismal LP by what is mainly a Cajun rock-and-roll band. Little traditional content.

Aldus Roger Plays the French Music of So, Louisiana, La Louisianne LP-107. Aldus Roger, accordion, vocal; Doc Guidry, fiddle; with guitar, steel guitar and drums--I Passed by Your Door, Lacassine Special, Grand Mamou, Flame of Hades, Steppin' Fast, Chere Tut-Tut, Lafayette Two-Step, Fi-Fi Fonceaux, The Unlucky Waltz, Over the Waves, Jambalaya, Johnny Can't Dance.

A popular dancehall group in performances of typical dance material.

Cajun Music at Home, La Louisianne LP-110. Alex Broussard--Louisiana Country and Nero;

Lawrence Walker--Unlucky Waltz and Little Black Eyes; Louis Cormier--Married Life and Aunt Adele's Waltz; Aldus Roger--One More Chance, Not Lonesome Anymore and Nobody Wants Me; Pee-Wee Broussard--Sorrow Waltz, La Lou Special and Lafayette Waltz.

Another LP collection of typical dancehall music with bands comprised of accordion, fiddle, rhythm guitar, steel guitar and drums.

Authentic French Acadian Music by Ambrose Thibodeaux, La Louisianne LP-112. La Valse Du Grand Marais, La Patasa Two-Step, La Vielle Valse De La Louisianne, Le Two-Step Ambrose, Le Valse Que J'amie, Chere, Chere Too-Toote, J'ai Passe Devant Ta Porte, Le Two-Step Que J'aime, Ton Tete Bec Est Doux, Le Two-Step Perrodins, Le Two-Step De Richie, Jolie Blon.

One of the few LPs on a regional Louisiana label devoted to the more traditional stylings. Group includes Thibodeaux on accordion; his daughter Leola on triange (and a bad vocal on one selection); Merlin Fontenot, fiddle; Preston Manuel, guitar and vocals. Thibodeaux does not sing himself, so most of the selections are either instrumentals or Manuel vocals. A nice LP.

More Authentic Acadian French Music, La Louisianne 119. Ambrose Thibodeaux, accordion; Gervis Quibodeaux, vocals; with violin, guitar, electric bass, triangle--Love Bridge Waltz, La Louisianne Two-Step, Duralder Waltz, Two-Step de Platin, Cherokee Waltz, Two-Step de Musicien, Widow Waltz, Lacassine Special, La Valse de Tasseau, Pauve Hobo, Point Noir Two-Step, Long Point Two-Step.

A very nice LP similar to his first, but here the singer is very good. The album's only flaw is the booming electric bass, which never lets up.

Aldus Roger, King of the French Accordion, La Louisianne LP-114. Lafayette Playboy Waltz, Hick's Wagon Wheel, Lovesick Waltz, Mardi Gras Dance, La Valse D'ennui, Zydeco Et Pas Sale, Midway Waltz, One More Chance, Not Lonesome Anymore, Diga Ding Ding Dong, Louisiana Waltz, Family Waltz.

More of the popular dancehall sound, but these recordings (since they were recorded in a studio without benefit of an audience) miss the shouting and noise usually associated with this kind of music.

Belton Richard Meets Aldus Roger, Chamo LP-1000. Waltz of No Return, Rayne Two-Step, La Valse De Parasol, Nonc Alcee, Calajena Calajan, Drunkard Waltz, Heart Broken Waltz, Lafayette

Playboy Two-Step, You Want Me Back Waltz, Je Passe D'avant Ta Porte, Hathaway Two-Step, Lafayette Polka.

Again more of the older-style accordion by Roger and of the newer approaches by Richard. Some of the selections feature just one of the accordionists, while others contrast their styles in duet. Like most of the regional LPs, this is a collection of releases that first appeared as 45-rpm single discs.

A Tribute to Harry Choates by Rufus Thibodeaux, Tribute LP-100. Vocals by Abe Manuel. Jole Blonde, Basile Waltz, Poor Hobo, Chere Petite, Louisiana Waltz, The Last Waltz, Allons A Lafayette, J'ai Passe Devant Ta Porte, Grand Texas, Chere Tou Toute, Big Mamou, Tes Petite, Tes Mignonne.

This is a nice LP featuring the excellent fiddle work of Thibodeaux, who almost copies the popular Choates fiddle style. The band also captures the characteristic sound of the Choates band. While the recorded sound is much better than that of the Choates originals on which these performances are based, much of the zesty exuberance of Choates' style is lacking. No accordion on this LP, however.

The Sounds of Cajun Music with Shirley Bergeron, Lanor LP-1000. J'ai Fait Mon Ede'e, Quel Etoile, New Country Waltz, Perrodin Two-Step, Waltz of the Past, French Rocking Boogie, Chez Tanie, Fais Do Do, Old Home Waltz, Madam Boso, La Valse De La Belle, Mama and Papa.

Bergeron, who has a fine voice, plays steel guitar while his father Alphee Bergeron plays accordion. The band is a typical group, with electric bass, drums and other instruments.

Cajun Hits, Vol. 1, Swallow LP-6001. Aldus Roger--Cajun Special; Louis Cormier--Drunkard's Blues; Sidney Brown--Font Kee-lot Two-Step; Lawrence Walker--Midnight Waltz; Austin Pitre--Two-Step De Bayou Teche and Opelousas Waltz; Adam Herbert--My Rope and Spurs, I'd Like to Know and Donnez-Moi Colinda; Vin Bruce--Le Delaysay; Joel Sonnier--Tee Yeaux Bleu; Gene Rodrigue--Le Jour Est La.

A nice LP by typical contemporary groups employing acc'dion, fiddle, steel guitar and drums.

Vin Bruce Sings "Jole Blon" and Other Cajun Classics, Swallow LP-6002. Jole Blon, Chere Cherie, Tee Maurice, J'ai Passer D'avant Ta Porte, Big Texas, Big Mamou, Dans La Louisianne, Fille De La Ville, Oh Ma Belle, Coeur De La

Ville, La Valse De St. Marie, J'ai Laisser Mon Coeur.

Bruce sings in a rather sweet voice with Country-and-Western overtones. There is no acc'dion on this LP but fiddle and crying steel guitar are heard throughout.

Vin Bruce's Greatest Hits, Swallow LP-6006. Dans Le Claire De La Lune, The Musician, Colinda, I'll Be A Bachelor, Le Delaysay, Si Tu M'aime, Jolie Fille, I Lost My Mind, I'm A Poor Hobo, Jolie Brun, Christmas with A Broken Heart, Le Jour Est La.

Another collection by the sweet-, mellow-voiced Bruce, with Nashville-styled backing for the most part.

Cajun Hits, Vol. 2, Swallow LP-6003. Aldus Roger--Valse A Alida; Vin Bruce--Colinda; Austin Pitre--Two-Step A Tante Adele; Lawrence Walker--Les Bon Temps; Badeaux--The Back Door and Valse De Jolly Rogers; Maurice Barzas--Mamou Hot Step; Doris Matt--Tracks of My Buggy and Mardi Gras Twist; The Cajun Trio--Cajun Twist; Adam Herbert--For the Last Time and North Side Door.

Another nice collection of mainly accordion bands in typical contemporary styles; this LP offers considerable variety.

Favorite Cajun Tales by Marion Marcotte, Swallow LP-6004. Le Pedleur, L'Histoire A Dudley, La Nos A Rosalia, L'eau Haute de '27.

Not a Cajun music LP, this set contains four stories told by one of the most popular storytellers. Marcotte does sing and play guitar on some recordings I have heard. All the stories are in Cajun French.

Songs and Music from Marine, Swallow LP-6005. Happy Fats, Alec Broussard and the Channel 10 KLFY Gang--Marine Theme (Jesse Polka), Bayou Lafourche, Gentleman Jean Lafitte, Aces and Aces, Cajinne Lulu, Folsom Blues, Mon Bon Vieux Mari, Gov. McKeithen's Inaugural March, Tous Les Soirs, Les Blues De La Ville, Dans Le Claire De La Lune, Dimanche Matin.

Happy Fats is one of the oldest and worst exponents of that brand of pseudo-Cajun music which is really more Country-and-Western than Cajun. He is on television and has a following, largely among non-Cajuns. No accordion on this LP. His commercial, sweet, phoney style represents the worst outgrowth of the Cajun tradition.

Cajun Hits, Vol. 3, Swallow LP-6007. Doris Matte--Passe Partout and She's Too Young to Marry; Belton Richard--Lonesome Waltz and Pardon Waltz; Joe Bonsall--Step It Fast and Chere Tout Tout; The Cajun Trio--Pestauche A Tante Nana; Aldus Roger--O.S.T. Special; Badeaux--She Didn't Know I Was Married; Cleveland Crochet--Country Woman; Lawrence Walker--Walker Special; Adam Herbert--My Turn Will Come.

Another good collection of music from some of the contemporary groups.

Allons Au Fais Do-Do, Swallow 6009 (this is actually the 4th volume in Swallow's series of anthologies compiled from 45-rpm single releases). Nathan Abshire--Lemonade Song; Joe Bonsall--Petite ou Grosse; Adam Herbert--Dance Cajun Dance; Dewey Balfa and Brothers--Indian on a Stomp, Drunkard's Sorrow Waltz; Austin Pitre--Chataignier Waltz; George Fontenot--Lés Dagos son tout Malade, Push My Wheelbarrow; Belton Richard--A Fool's Waltz; Harry Fontenot--Lonesome Soldier Waltz; Isom, Cyp and Adam--La Betaile Dans L'arbe, Grand Mamou.

A fine LP of contemporary groups, with lots of variety. Most of the performances are in the older traditions, with very little amplification of instruments.

Modern Sounds in Cajun Music, Swallow 6010. Belton Richard, with accordion, steel guitar, 2 fiddles, rhythm guitar, bass guitar, drums--Cajun Stripper, I'll Have to Forget You, Along the River, I Don't Want You Any More, Just A Dream, Un Autre Soir D'ennui, Cajun Waltz, Antonio Rose, Madame Sostan, Cherokee Waltz, Who-diggie, Oh Yea Yi-Yi.

This is as the title indicates--modern sounds, and what a mixture it is! Rock-and-roll, Cajun, and Nashville c&w. Not to my liking but, then, it's probably outselling all other Cajun LPs. A very slick group.

Cajun Fais Do-Do, Arhoolie 5004, Nathan Abshire--Cajun Two-Step, Gabrielle Waltz, Grey Night Special, Ma Negresse, Bayou Pon Pon, Old Folks Polka, Calcasieu Waltz, Le Temps A Pres Finir; Breaux Brothers--Hey Ma, Crowley Two-Step, La Branche de Muriee; Isom Fontenot--Madelainne, La Valse de la Misere, Crowley Two-Step, La Betaile; Cyp and Adam Landreneau--In a Pile of Hay, Chere Mom, Grand Mamou.

Still active, Nathan Abshire is one of the very best of the older accordion players. His repertoire includes not only the standard waltzes and

two-steps, but also blues, polkas and religious numbers. This is one of the best sessions of real Cajun music on record. The Breaux brothers are also in the older traditions, and sound fine here. Isom Fontenot is a superb harmonica player, and first appeared on the Folk Lyric anthology. The Landreneau group is likewise in the older style, though not as professional as the Abshire band. Their music is nice, although they were not at their best on the day of this recording.

Joseph Falcon and His Silver Bell String Band, Arhoolie 5005. Les Flambes D'enfer, Le Tortillage, Lacassine Special, Allons a Lafayette, Osson Two-Step, Hip Et Taiaut, Creole Stomp, Allons Danser Colinda.

Recorded at the Triangle Dance Hall in Scott, La., by Mrs. Post, this LP is one of my favorites. The group includes the veteran Joe Falcon on accordion and vocals, his wife on drums, plus violin and guitar. Emphasis is on the up-tempo two-steps, and the feeling of this music as dance music comes across splendidly. Falcon was the first Cajun musician to record and this, his last recording, is one of his best.

Cajun Songs from Louisiana, Folkways 4438; Recorded by L. Bonstein. Gabriel, Les Maringuins Ont Mange Ma Belle, La Chanson de Cinquante Sons, La Fille de Quatorze Ans, Vals de Char', Toutoune, Allons Danser Colinda, Valse de Church Point, Johnny Kid Dance, Jolie Blonde, J'ai Passe Desson L'Pommier, Fleur de la Jeunesse, Les Filles de Vermillion, Le Papier D'eping, J'ai Passe Devant Ta Porte, La Noce A Josephine.

A rather scholarly and self-consciously "ethnic" series of performances by soloists with either guitar or accordion accompaniment.

--Zydeco Recordings--

Zydeco, Arhoolie 1009. Paul McZiel--Alons a Lafayette, Tap Dance; Sidney Babineaux--One-Step, Original Zydeco; Albert Chevalier--Les Haricot Sont Pas Sale; Robert Clemon--Mont Ma Coucher; Willie Green--Green's Zydeco; Herbert Sam--They Call Me Good Rocking; Amade Ardoin--La Valse de Amities, Les Blues de Voyages; Leadbelly--Corn Bread Rough, Sukey Jump; Lightning Hopkins--Zydeco; Clifton Chenier--Clifton's Blues, Louisiana Stomp; Clarence Garlow--Bon Ton Roulet.

Side One of this album (the first eight titles) presents a series of new recordings by various Zydeco musicians along the Texas-Louisiana Gulf Coast and shows the evolution of the style. Side Two consists of reissues of early recordings of

this regional music, which blends blues and Cajun music. An interesting document.

Clifton Chenier, Louisiana Blues and Zydeco, Arhoolie LP-1024. Eh, 'Tite Fille, Banana Man, Hot Rod, It's Hard, I Can Look Down at Your Woman, I Can't Stand, Zydeco Et Pas Sale, Lafayette Waltz, Louisiana Two-Step, Clifton's Waltz, Louisiana Blues.

Chenier is a strong singer and a superb musician whose music has strong blues and jazz overtones. This is contemporary music. The first side features rhythm-and-blues material played on accordion, presenting an interesting and vital hybrid style.

Bon Ton Roulet, Arhoolie 1031. Clifton Chenier, vocals, accordion; with rub-board, or with electric guitar, piano, bass and drums--Frog Legs, If I Ever Get Lucky, Black Gal, Long Toes, Baby Please Don't Go, Ma Negresse, Sweet Little Doll, Jole Blonde, Ay Ai Ai, Can't Stop Loving You, Keep on Scratching.

More by this superb singer and accordionist. Some of these tracks are really rhythm-and-blues performances, with standard electric backup, while those with accordion and rub-board are more solidly rooted in older tradition.

Blues du Bayou, Melodeon 7330. Alphonse "Bois-Sec" Ardoin and Conray Fontenot--Les Blues du Voyageur, Jolie Bassette, Quo Faire?, Le Chicot a Bois-Sec, Bon Soir Moreau, La Robe Baree, Tit Monde, Valse a Conray, La Valse de La Prison, La Danse de la Misere, La Valse d'Oberlin, Les Haricots, Fais Pas Cal, Duralde Ramble, 'Tit Galop, Allez-Vous-En.

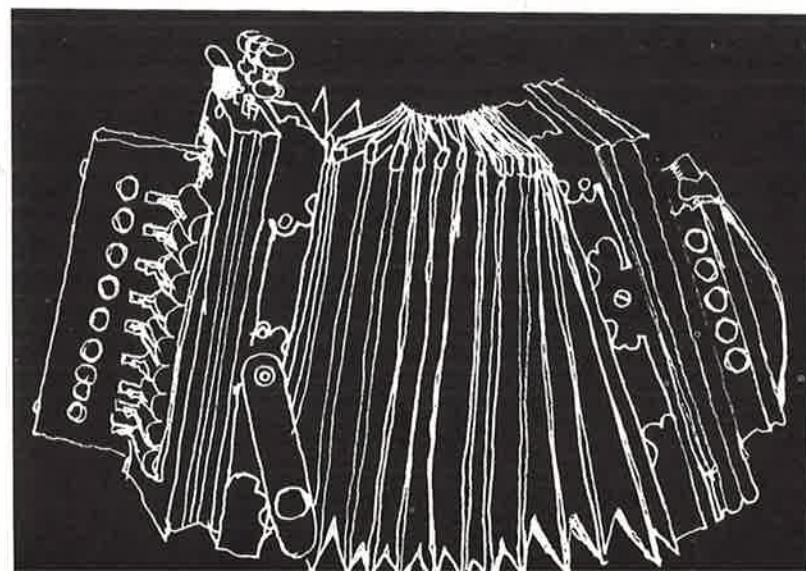
Using only accordion, fiddle and triangle, this old-style Negro Cajun music is often hardly distinguishable from the older white counterpart, since the blues influence is rather slight (in

contrast to the music of, say, Clifton Chenier). I miss the drums and washboard you hear in all the Negro beer joints in that part of the country. A nice document of this early style, but not easy listening!

In addition to these individual albums, Cajun performances may be found on a number of re-issue and anthology collections. Old Timey LP-100 (The String Bands, Vol. 1) contains the Hackberry Ramblers' Crowley Waltz and Tickle Her, and Joe Falcon's Osson. Old Timey LP-101 (The String Bands, Vol. 2) has Nathan Abshire's Cannon Ball Blues and the Hackberry Ramblers' Hackberry Trot. Included in Folkways 6-LP set FP-251-253 (Anthology of American Folk Music) are Delma Lachney and Blind Uncle Gaspard's La Danseuse; Columbus Fruge's Saut Crapaud; Joseph Falcon's Arcadian One-Step, Le Vieux Soulard Et Sa Femme and C'est Si Triste Sans Lui; Breaux Freres' Home Sweet Home, and Didier Herbert's I Woke Up One Morning in May. In addition, selections by the Cajun Band are to be found on Vanguard LP-9182 (Traditional Music at Newport, 1964, Vol. 1) and LP-9186 (Evening Concerts at Newport, 1964, Vol. 3).

LPs of Cajun music are still forthcoming, and this list is only an attempt to itemize all the LPs available in the Fall of 1968. There also are hundreds of 45-rpm records produced every year in Louisiana by various regional labels. It is advised that these be purchased as they are released, since experience has shown that old Cajun records from any early period are very rare indeed.

In addition to the Swallow LP by Marion Marcotte, there are a number of Cajun humor records on the market, including six by Bud Fletcher (La Louisianne), three by Justin Wilson, and one each by Cajun Pete (Mercury LP-20633), Buck Mouhart (Tic Toc LP-106), and a very fine one by Frenchie Carte (Cajun Classics LP-1000).





THE ROBERT JOHNSON I KNEW

BY JOHNNY SHINES

The remarkable and interesting reminiscence of the legendary Robert Johnson which follows was written by Johnny Shines, a singer and guitarist who knew Johnson well in the mid-1930s, who traveled with him on and off for two years, and who absorbed a great deal from the slightly

older Mississippi bluesman. Shines was born April 26, 1915, in Frazier, Tennessee, then a suburb of Memphis but now absorbed into the city. A member of a musical family, Johnny started playing guitar in 1932, learning much from the recordings of Blind Lemon Jefferson,

Charlie Patton, Lonnie Johnson and Scrapper Blackwell. He started performing the following year, and over the next several years worked regularly in and around Memphis with a number of bluesmen. He met Johnson in 1935, and traveled and performed with him until 1937.

Shines continued to perform in the Tennessee-Arkansas area until 1941, when he moved to Chicago, where he still lives. He soon established himself on the city's busy scene, and made his first recordings--with pianist Roosevelt Sykes among his accompanists--in the mid-1940s for Columbia. At least four sides were cut, but they remain unissued. In 1951 he recorded, as "Shoe Shine Johnny," two sides for Chess; the record coupling them, Chess 1443, *Joliet Blues* and *So Glad I Found You*, is extraordinarily rare, far rarer in fact than the two discs he made two years later for the small Chicago independent label, J.O.B. Records, formed in 1949 by blues singer St. Louis Jimmy Oden. For this label he did his celebrated version of *Ramblin'*, a number he had learned from Johnson (it has been re-issued on *Country Blues Classics*, Vol. 2, *Blues Classics 6*), and three other sides, *Evenin' Sun*, *Brutal Hearted Woman*, and *Cool Driver*, as well as serving as accompanist for several other artists, Snooky Pryor, Homesick James Williamson, and Arbee Stidham among them.

Due to decreased interest in the older country-based music he performs so well, Johnny gave up an active career in the late 1950s, but has made some recordings in recent years. In 1965 he recorded six numbers for Vanguard's *Chicago/The Blues/Today* (Vanguard 9218) series, and in May of the following year recorded 15 performances for Testament Records (Testament 2212). The article which follows was written as two letters to me: I have taken the liberty of rearranging their contents into more chronological order.

--Pete Welding

I met Robert in 1935 in Helena, Arkansas, through a friend of his and mine who had played piano with me in Hughes, Ark. I never did know this fellow's right name, but everybody called him "M.&O." He often talked to me about Robert and how good he was, and he wanted the three of us to get together and jam some. So we went to Helena, Ark., to meet Robert. M.&O. had heard that Robert was in Helena.

It was a worthwhile trip--I met a friend, someone who liked to travel and play music as well as I did. When Robert and I first met, I was twenty years old, and I would say that he was about twenty-two or twenty-three.

Now, we didn't decide to team up. We just went places together and played together. The fact of it was that I was the bad penny. I stayed on Robert's heels, and at that time I would follow anyone who had a run, a riff, or a chord that I wanted until I got it, if they were anyways friendly at all.

Through M.&O. we struck up a good friendship, but while we were there Robert left town. He went over into Mississippi and, if it hadn't been for M.&O.'s knowing how Robert was, I would still be waiting for him to come back!

Then I met him again in Memphis. That was my home and I wanted to be anywhere but there. So Robert was telling me about how he had to go to Dallas to make some records, and I told him "let's go," but he had a ticket and I didn't. We went as far as Texarkana, Ark., and I told him to go on, I would catch up to him soon, and I did. I caught him in a place called Red Water, Texas. Robert had made his records (Note: this would have been in 1937, as Johnson recorded in Dallas on June 19 and 20 of that year), and we had a lot of fun. He would play them for me and I would learn them.

We worked Texas until the cold weather began to set in, then we headed for the southern part of Texas. That's when I found out that Texas was a cotton country; I had thought Texas was only a cow country. Robert and I came back into Arkansas as far as Little Rock. I can't recall just what happened, but my mother was in Arkansas not too far from Hughes and I ended up there. Robert went on, but I stayed on in Hughes. One night I came in and was putting my guitar away when a girl came up to me and told me that a fellow was in my bed who said he knew me real well and could play like she had never heard before. I asked what did he play? When she said guitar, that did it! I knew it was Robert.

We worked around there together, and most of the time individually. What I mean by that is that there were very few songs that Robert wanted to play with any one, so we mostly played in turns. Hughes was a small town, but if anything was going on anywhere it was there. We made the paydays at Stuttgart, Cotton Plant, Snow Lake, and many other places, together and sometimes separately. If we both were in Hughes at the same time we shared the room, or whoever was there on Monday paid the rent.

Well, summer came and we had to go somewhere. That was in '36. We crossed each other regular after that. Then in the spring of '37 we hit Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Windsor,

Ontario, then Michigan again, and New York.

We went back to Illinois, as far as Chicago, then we split again.

Since Robert was the peculiar person that he was, you would have to say that his love life was very slack or open. You see, no woman really had an iron hand on Robert at any time. When his time came to go, he just went. I never could see how a man could be quite so neutral. I have seen him treated so royally that you would think he would never depart from this kindhearted woman that would do anything in this world for him. But how wrong can you be?

There were two guys over in Jersey that had heard about Robert and me being in New York, and by some magic they found us and wanted us to go over in Jersey to play for them. That was right up Robert's alley. At the time Robert and I were going with two girls in New York.

So we --Robert and I-- left New York and went to New Jersey with these guys to play for them, and for two weeks we didn't think to write but by the same magic the girls found Robert and me. Being the silly ones that they were, they wanted us to go back with them. Robert would have no part of this: he was ready to go south, north or west but not back to New York -- and the way we were living you would think any person in his right mind would want to get away from that place. Don't get me wrong. We were making good money; the people were going for what we were putting down, and we were really unloading. But these girls, they were loaded and offering us everything we wanted, but Bob treated them like they were just two old friends we once had known.

Now, look, please don't let the way this is being said disillusion you at all. Robert was far from being a sissy, and sometimes was too forward. Even men's wives were fair game for him.

Let us change the scene to Arkansas.

We were having quite a time in this little town where people gathered every night to gamble, drink, and dance, or whatever employed their minds to do for their pleasure. We were playing regularly in this get-together joint every night and this specific night Robert saw this girl and wanted to meet her. He found another girl who knew her, and got this girl to introduce them.

Robert didn't lose any time, even though she told him she was married. Robert would not let her out of his sight the rest of the night. And when we left there a couple of days later she was with us, and she stayed for quite a while. Her name was

Louise, and she was everything that Robert wanted: she could sing, dance, drink and fight like hell. Oh, yes, she could play a little guitar too. She and Robert used to get on until she hit him on the head with a hot stove eye. I don't think that was part of Robert's plan at all, because they never got along well after that.

I only know two women who might have been near as close, and they were Shakey Horton's sister and Robert Lockwood Jr.'s mother. I have heard Bob talk more about Shakey's sister than anyone else. Robert's mother must have meant quite a bit to him too, because he called her his wife. I am sure that you've noticed I call these ladies "girls," but that is just a figure of speech, because there was only one girl in the bunch, and that was Horton's sister. She was in her early teens, but the rest were thirty and older. Robert spent a lot of time getting the attention of girls without knowing it himself, and he spent the rest of the time trying to get away from them.

Robert's route was: Memphis, Tennessee; Mississippi; Helena, Arkansas; Missouri; and sometimes Texas. He was a guy that could find a way to make a song sound good with a slide, regardless of its contents or nature. His guitar seemed to talk--repeat and say words with him like no one else in the world could. I said he had a talking guitar, and many a person agreed with me.

This sound affected most women in a way that I could never understand. One time in St. Louis we were playing one of the songs that Robert would like to play with someone once in a great while, Come on in My Kitchen. He was playing very slow and passionately, and when we had quit, I noticed no one was saying anything. Then I realized they were crying--both women and men.

Things like this often happened, and I think Robert would cry just as hard as anyone. It was things like this, it seems to me, that made Robert want to be by himself, and he would soon be by himself. The thing that was different, I think, was that Robert would do his crying on the inside. Yes, his crying was on the inside.

As I have already said, Robert was far from being a sissy, and he proved it without trying. He could do the darnedest things. Women, to Robert, were like motel or hotel rooms: even if he used them repeatedly he left them where he found them. Robert was like a sailor -- with one exception: a sailor has a girl in every port but Robert had a woman in every town. Heaven help him, he was not discriminating -- probably a bit like Christ. He loved them all -- the old, young, fat, thin, and the short. They were all alike to Robert.



Photo by Ray Flerlage

We were in West Memphis, Ark., staying at the Hunt Hotel, and playing for a fellow called "City." There was a girl not more than a midget in height and size who also lived in this Hunt Hotel that we all took for granted because she was always running errands for the three of us as well as everyone else in the neighborhood. When she would make a run for us, the change that was left, we would give it to her because we thought she was just a very nice girl.

One day we missed Robert and thought he was on 8th Street with a girl that he gave quite a bit of attention to. We were satisfied with this explanation until the girl we thought he was with came over with food for Robert, and the rest of us too, but when she didn't find Robert we had to make a quick guess as to where he was regardless of what we really thought. So we said he was in Memphis, but she wanted no part of this and was getting quite angry. So somebody had to find him. Well, I knew this little girl always was up and around early and she might just know where Robert was -- and she did. One guess, and I bet you are right! He was there in her bed. She only had one room and since it would have looked kind of foolish to ask her to go out of her own room so I could talk to Robert, I told her what had happened, and she was very broad-minded about the whole thing. She in turn told Robert as though he weren't listening and showed him a way to get out of the hotel without being seen, and it worked. After that, Robert used this exit quite often, but he was not always coming from the little girl's room!

One time we were in Wickliffe, Kentucky, and met some girls that I liked very much. They were a dance team that had never been no place and wanted to be seen and heard. I should have said a song--

and-dance team of four people. They could really go to town, and I wanted to take them with us when we left and had it all arranged, but Bob, he would slip from one girl to the other until he had them all fighting among themselves. Now he was ready to give them the slip, and we did.

Did Robert really love? Yes, like a hobo loves a train -- off one and on the other.

Robert had all kinds of moods--singing, playing, drinking, fighting, rambling, sometimes talking (which was the shortest mood of all, except playing with other men in a playful manner). It seems to me that where there were no women around, that's where Robert would find the woman he liked best; and had to have her or go to hell trying to get her. And he got her.

Robert left me in Chicago. He went to St. Louis, to the state line--that is where Arkansas and Missouri join--and from there to Blythesville, Ark., then to Memphis, Tenn., and then back to Hughes, Ark. I caught up with him in Helena, Arkansas.

If you want to guess, you can score yourself a hundred: yes, he was back with Robert Lockwood's mother again. He spent lots of time going between her house and another house that I won't name at this time. Yes, Robert was quite a ladies' man, but he was always running from one, to learn a new face, or to get where another woman was that he already knew. Then Robert went over into Mississippi. I didn't like the thought of Mississippi, so I didn't go with him, and I never saw Robert again.

This was the Robert Johnson that I knew and the good things that I knew about him.



Photo, Pete Welding

The Folks' Own Festivals

By Bob Baldwin

Southern string band music continues to invade the North and Yankee banjo pickers keep heading south looking for the source. The Rebs and northerners inevitably wind up together in the big picking sessions held annually at places like Union Grove, N.C., or Galax, Va.

The gatherings are known as "fiddlers' conventions" -- which is probably just as well. If the truth were too blatantly proclaimed -- if, for instance, the sponsors came right out and called

these affairs "bluegrass festivals" -- a disproportionate share of Yankees would undoubtedly be attracted.

Not that anybody minds the presence of the northerners. Whatever the South isn't, it is hospitable. But there is a tradition here, a southern one, and everyone knows it, including the musicians from Boston, New York and Philadelphia.

String band music is at home here. Your ears tell you that. The sound belongs here along with

the unpainted barns, the brilliant blue sky and the red earth. In its own surroundings it takes on more meaning.

The modern trappings -- the western hats, string ties and cowboy boots -- are as much a part of the music these days as are the Martin D-28 guitars and the Mastertone banjos. But the music doesn't depend on them. It never did, of course.

"The contest opened with a selection by the Sherrill's Ford Band, a banjo and a fiddle, followed by the Blankenship Band, a harp and two violins. Then came the Josey Band, a banjo and a fiddle, J.W. and H.P. Van Hoy came next with Whistling Rufus, a harp and a fiddle. Band prizes: Mayhew first, Josey second, Van Hoy third. Single fiddlers J.W. Van Hoy first, Henry Mayhew second, Ed Ball third."

The foregoing paragraph appeared in the Statesville, N.C., *Record and Landmark* on Dec. 24, 1912 describing a fiddlers' convention which had been held at the Teedell County court house. Today's conventions are much in the same spirit, and bluegrass is evidently no more and no less than a current manifestation of the string-band tradition.

The principal difference between the old-time conventions and those of today is that many, if not most, of the musicians and spectators now come from outside the immediate community. The use of electric instruments has always been accepted at Union Grove, but bands using them are judged separately from those that don't. At Galax, the use of electric instruments is not allowed. Each of the conventions nowadays usually draws between 300 and 400 contestants and several thousand spectators.

Union Grove's "Old Time Fiddlers Convention" was organized in 1924 for the purpose of raising money for the Union Grove School and appears to be the oldest such convention still in existence.

The town itself is little more than a country crossroads in size. It boasts half a dozen places of business, a feed mill, a volunteer fire department and, of course, the school, which has received more than \$40,000 over the years as a result of the convention.

Unlike Galax, Union Grove is not a mountain community. It lies in the rolling Piedmont country just east of the Brushy Mountains, almost an hour's drive from the crest of the Blue Ridge.

And it comes as a surprise to many visitors that the instrumental folk music played here has never been an exclusively mountain product. Practically

any rural community throughout the Piedmont has its old-timers who can still "clawhammer" a banjo, fiddle a breakdown or reel, or dance a buck and wing.

Union Grove's convention has been held on the Saturday before Easter for the past 42 years. The Galax fiddlers convention, founded in 1935, is held on the second weekend in August.

There are smaller fiddlers' conventions to be found in many Piedmont and southern mountain communities, but none of them offer the exuberant festival atmosphere of Union Grove or Galax. Generally speaking, the smaller the convention the more it depends on purely local talent, and to provide a full program the smaller conventions tend to fill in with nondescript bands featuring electric instruments in the hands of second-rate Chet Atkins imitators. It's all "good and country," but it doesn't satisfy anyone whose ear is tuned for the simplicity and directness of an older tradition. Then, too, the electric instruments require a power source which restricts the proceedings to the somewhat formal setting of an auditorium.

At the larger conventions, a more informal atmosphere prevails. The Galax affair is held in a ball park, and at Union Grove the school grounds provide plenty of space for informal picking and singing. It is only when the bands make their appearance before the judges that spectators and musicians are separated. During the daylight hours, as the bands warm up, the happy listener may wander from group to group sampling music in the manner of a hummingbird visiting blossoms.

String band music sounds better out of doors -- especially so when it can be heard without benefit

Galax, Saturday afternoon concert



Photo, Pete Welding



"Have music, will travel . . ." Union Grove



H. P. Van Hoy, Union Grove contest founder



Roger Sprung, banjo and friends, Galax



George Pegram, Union Grove

of a public address system. There is a closeness here, too, between musician and listener. They may know each other, or they may look familiar to each other from long years of attending fiddlers' conventions. At any rate, they're both country boys: "Son of a gun, you play that thing like you from Georgia."

Or, sometimes it's a city kid from up North, but he knows what he's doing. Jody Stecher, guitar player with the New York City Ramblers, wearing his hair at shoulder length, didn't have the appearance of a country boy but he was proclaimed "World's Champion Guitar Player" at Union Grove one year.

The same thing wouldn't have happened at Galax, where the stated purpose of the festival is "to help preserve and perpetuate for posterity the old mountain and folk music for which this section of the country has long been famous." At the Galax festival, not only is it rare if a northerner finishes in the prize money, but rather unusual if anyone from outside Grayson or Carroll Counties does.

The musicians themselves don't usually make the same geographical judgments, remaining interested essentially in how a man sounds. This is especially true among the bluegrassers whose music has become sufficiently formalized enough in the last few years to serve as a common language.

More individuality appears among the old timers. Some of them are men in their 70s and 80s

and they've got their own tricks for squeezing extra notes out of a banjo or fiddle tune. There's a quiet, unspoken humor in the eyes of a man like Charlie Higgins, acknowledged "King of the Fiddlers" at the Galax festival -- a look that implies a deeper knowledge than your own of what this music's all about.

Most of the country musicians appearing at either of these conventions are non-professionals. They are mechanics, tobacco workers, farmers, storekeepers. Some, like Bascom Lamar Lunsford or Clarence Ashley, are familiar to many northern visitors through festival appearances and recordings. A number of the bands have also recorded.

A great many of the musicians play at both festivals, some traveling extremely long distances to get there. Ostensibly they come to compete for prize money, and compete they do, but any of the musicians will readily admit that he's really there for the enjoyment of it. There is probably no place on earth where the makers of southern string band music can find so appreciative an audience.

Both festivals get underway on Friday evening but everybody keeps sounding better hour by hour, and it's not until Saturday that the bands settle down to their best picking.

Clark Kessinger, 71, of the Kanawha Valley region of West Virginia had, apparently, ended his recording career some five years before the Galax Fiddlers' Convention was founded 31 years ago. At the 1965 convention, he stunned listeners

with the same inspired fiddling that characterized the more than 70 sides he had cut for the Brunswick label between 1928 and 1930. On this Saturday afternoon in Galax, Kessinger had happened to meet guitarist Gene Meade of Draper, N.C. Meade, a much younger man who works as a mechanic, has been playing with Clark ever since. Together they have won half a dozen fiddling contests, made a record, and received a standing ovation at the Newport Folk Festival.

But this was their first meeting: Kessinger the showman, the twinkieyed old fiddler showing all the young folks how it's done -- how it's supposed to sound -- effortlessly soaring away above Meade's triphammer flatpicking, young Wayne Hauser of Winston-Salem handling the banjo part, keeping it sustained, even and brilliant.

They polished it all afternoon and when night fell they took it before the audience out in the baseball stands and played it for the judges and it was one of the very few times (somebody said the only time) that a band from outside Virginia had taken first place.

Saturday afternoons at fiddlers' conventions are full of moments that touch you. Like the year at Union Grove when Bartow Riley brought a trio from Hales Center, Tex., playing that wheeling, turning kind of fiddle music that makes you think of wind moaning across empty plains: the bass player, an old man in a ten-gallon hat and snow-white mustache, looking as if he ate rattlesnakes for

breakfast, sitting out a number and adding his comments every time Riley would sort of smear on over into minor, "Oooh, I heard you that time," or, "Man, he's really hoeing the weeds."

Roger Sprung of New York City shows up at Galax regularly each year, usually after appearing at the annual Mountain Dance and Folk Festival in Asheville the previous weekend. Sprung, who was busy learning bluegrass banjo from southerners in the early 50s is now turning southerners with his own self-styled "progressive bluegrass." He stands apart from the other northerners who make this scene in that he is an innovator.

"I get tired of hearing everybody playing something like Flint Hill Special just alike -- even in the same key for Christ's sake," Sprung explained.

And you remember a day in 1952 in Washington Square, in New York City when Sprung played Flint Hill Special note-for-note just like Earl Scruggs, and suddenly at Union Grove or Galax you hear some kid of 19 or 20 from rural Virginia picking Midnight in Moscow note-for-note just like Roger.

Sometimes the fear is expressed, usually by well-meaning persons from outside the community, that the young musicians from the North are, in a sense, "polluting" the pure, traditional strains of the music. Such a position, I think, shows a lack of understanding of the music's terrific respect for its own past.



Photo, Pete Welding

In the parking lot at Galax

A first visit by an outsider to Galax or Union Grove is almost certain to impress him with the continuing vitality of traditional music. Contestants range from tots of four or five years, who can barely support the heavy Gibson banjos they play, to fiddling, banjo-picking, buck-dancing octogenarians. Exposure, by way of radio and television, to a wide range of more commercial music hasn't killed the taste for the pure and simple, or the ability to produce it.

Jamming backstage at Galax



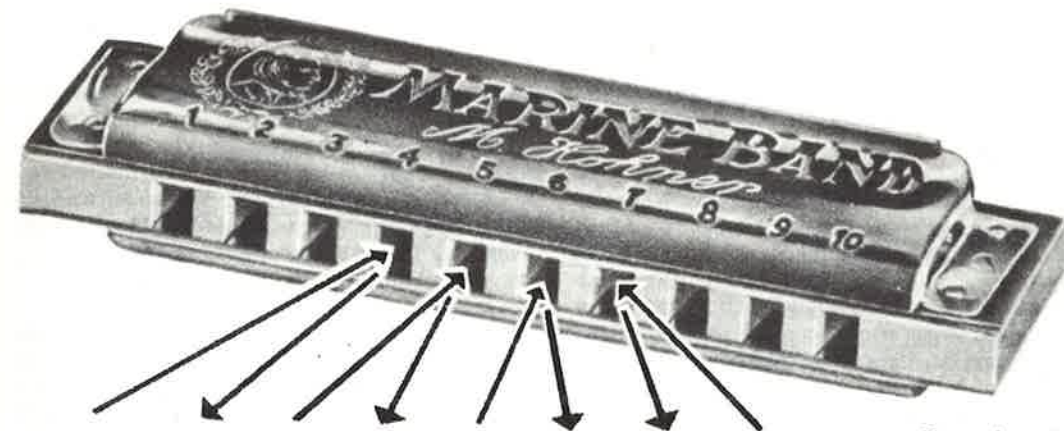
Traditional music remains in the South because the people want it to remain. It is their music and they recognize it as such. And if a bunch of strange-looking characters with beards and mustaches come all the way from New York or Chicago to listen to it, why that's just fine.

It's always well after midnight on Saturday before prize money is awarded. And the Galax convention always ends with a "foot-dancing" contest. The dancing, known variously as "clogging," "flat-footing" or "buck dancing" (if the dancer is a male), appears to be rooted far deeper in tradition than the instrumental music. The rhythm of the dance is kept with the feet and the rest of the body just sort of goes along for the ride. It is said to stem from the livelier portion of ancient Morris dances in the British Isles.

The top bands of the night take turns playing for the dancers, who appear one at a time on a rough wooden stage, their flailing feet beating great clouds of dust from the groaning floorboards. Each dancer has his own style.

I recall a night when a dark-haired young mountain girl, maybe 11 or 12 years old, was pouring everything she could into it.

"C'MON SIS!" bellowed a joyously drunken mountain man from the audience. Everybody roared their approval. And you knew that strictly speaking, the man wasn't related to the girl, at least no more so than anybody else who was there.



4 4 5 5 6 6 7 7
C D E F G A B C

Scale in
Holes
4, 5, 6, 7

Remembering Sonny Boy

By Paul Oliver

One of the distinguishing characteristics of the blues when the idiom is compared with other folk musics is the individuality of its creators. Many folk musics may be considered as the creation of a group rather than of the individual, and though the sources of some ballads, for instance, are known, the general impression of collective creation has more than some basis in fact. The international spread of certain ballads that retain their character and narrative thread through many transpositions and the passing of generations imparts to them a vigorous life which seems more real than that of their singers.

But the blues -- though it draws from a common pool of phrases, verses and themes -- depends for its life upon the individual creativity of the singers. Even flamenco and cante hondo -- which share with the blues the elements of improvisation and topicality and which lay a similar emphasis on the qualities of the singers -- do not compare with the blues in the latitude of personal style, instrumental technique and originality of invention. Flamenco is enchainé by its own clichés and the rigidity of the idiom does not allow for widely divergent talents.

Blues, too, is not without its conventions, which sometimes handicap the truly novel talents and provide ready-made formulae for the less imaginative. Blues criteria are still vague and ill-defined but it would seem from the great popularity

of blues among Negro audiences that the singers with uniquely personal contributions to make in their singing, their playing, their lyrics and their view of life are those that they esteem. By this token one can perceive the reasons for their admiration of artists as widely varying as Joe Pullum, Blind Lemon Jefferson, Roosevelt Sykes, Muddy Waters, Bumble Bee Slim or Walter Roland -- to take random instances. And by the same evidence, the widespread popularity of Sonny Boy Williamson -- of both Sonny Boy Williamsons, in fact -- is readily understandable.

Sonny Boy Williamson Nos. 1 and 2 -- the numerical identification is ponderous and does both singers who used the name a certain injustice. There is a tradition of name-borrowing in the blues, generally arising from a hoped-for benefit from the reflected glory of borrowing a well-known singer's name. Leroy Carr had his "Buddy" in Bill Gaither; Doctor Clayton his "Buddy" in Sunnyland Slim; Peetie Wheatstraw his "Boy" in Robert Lee McCoy. There was even a precedent for the "No. 2" suffix -- Brownie McGhee was billed as Blind Boy Fuller #2, but to his own irritation, as a manager's gimmick.

With Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2 it was different: he always maintained that the name was rightfully his own and it was clear from his playing and singing that he had no intention of copying the man who had recorded before him; clear that he resented the implied rivalry. "I'm the only Sonny Boy. I'm The

Sonny Boy; there ain't no other one but me," he used to say, amusing himself with the repetition, but meaning every word just the same. Blues collectors who knew the records and the reputation of John Lee "Sonny Boy" Williamson were skeptical. The younger man, who was born in Tennessee about 1912 and who was murdered in Chicago in 1948 after more than a decade of recording, was a very popular and greatly influential singer and harp player. What could be more likely than another singer, an embittered man perhaps, should capitalize on his fame? So went the argument, but the aging Sonny Boy persisted; it was he that had been copied, his name that had been taken, but it was John Lee who was first to get on records that were commercially issued.

John Lee Williamson, the "original" Sonny Boy, was an amiable, immensely likeable man whose generous disposition was one of his most appealing qualities. He was in conversation -- like another well-known singer, John Lee Hooker, -- "tongue-tied," having difficulty in forming his words and often stuttering nervously. Most of this departed when he sang; then his words came more easily, though always with a slight dental emphasis, and he invented blues with humour and wit. It was as a harmonica player that he was most admired and most widely copied; few other mouth-harp players have so shaped subsequent trends. When he was killed, the blues seemed to have lost one of its most exceptional personalities, and as many blues singers claim to have been working with him that night as others at an earlier date claimed to have witnessed the shooting of Pinetop Smith. So when a "Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2" was recorded some three years later, it seemed that someone was exploiting the memory of a much-loved singer.

What was the truth? Unfortunately, in his last years the second "Sonny Boy" wove a mesh of confusion about himself in a tragi-comic endeavour to establish his reputation. He need not have done so, for by that time his reputation was unassailed and he had his admirers on two continents. But he persisted because the matter meant a lot to him, and any posthumous biography must take into account his continued striving for recognition of his story. He would show his passport, made out in the name of Sonny Boy Williams, as proof of his name and insist that the young Tennessee singer had taken it for his own. His contemporaries in Arkansas knew him as Willie Williams, or as Willie Williamson, but farther North in St. Louis and Chicago his fellow blues singers recalled that his name was Willie Miller, or "Rice" Miller. Undoubtedly, he was the older of the two singers by perhaps a dozen years or more, but confusion still remains about his correct name, as it does about his birthdate. In his passport the place of

birth was given as Tallahatchie and the date April 7th, 1909. Almost certainly he was older than this, and indeed he had variously given his year of birth as 1894 and 1899 in the past, while on his recording of *The Story of Sonny Boy Williamson* made in Denmark, he said "I was born in Eighteen ninety-seven, in a lil small town, Glendora, Mississippi... Few years later... I came to the States..."

Glendora is in Tallahatchie County -- the town of Tallahatchie is in Panola County, forty-odd miles away and lies about thirty miles south-east of Clarksdale on Black Bayou. In Sonny Boy's early days it was little more than a few frame houses and it has grown little with the years; today it is a sultry, sleepy little township with its Negro area "across the tracks" of the Southern railroad. It is in blues country, and Sonny Boy, born and raised in the heart of it took the blues as part of his life. But the details of his childhood and his early years are obscure and will remain so, for he would say nothing about them. Clearly the memory was painful to him and seems to have been tied up in some way with the loss of his parents. Once, when I pressed him a little unkindly for details of his early life, he said, "I had it tough you know, in them days, and I just don't like to call it to mind." Normally he was always ready to embroider a story or invent a new one about his exploits in years past, but on his youth he would not even attempt to invent a background.

"You know, he was real evil a long while ago," one blues singer who had known him for years told me, and in spite of his reticence one knew it to be true. In his sixties Sonny Boy could still be mean and tough when he wanted to be; it was hard for him to be frank or generous. In this he was quite the antithesis of his namesake: suspicious, close and a tight-wad. From many aspects Sonny Boy was not a likeable character and his defence of surliness, of profanity and reckless bragging in turn lost him many intending friends. He resented being interviewed and suspected exploitation, as if the details of his life might be turned to the advantage of others. Whether this reflected events in his past can only be the subject of speculation, but he did enjoy sitting and talking idly and, under these circumstances, gradually dropped the veil of suspicion.

It needed very little -- a misplaced word -- for him to take offence, whether from a stranger or from another blues singer. He was involved in more than one fracas when in Europe, and though perhaps it is still too soon to relate the incident, he "jumped" another blues singer with a knife at a London hotel, and had to be forcibly separated from him before the consequences proved serious. He had been drinking heavily at the time, but he was always a steady drinker, carrying a hip flask

of whisky and pulling from it continually. It had severe effects on his temper and loosened the few controls on his language. In some ways he typified the popular image of the romantic, ornery, hard-drinking, rough-speaking, creative blues singer -- the colored counterpart of a latter-day cowboy cast in dime-novel mould.

This was one side of Sonny Boy Williamson, but there was another, less easily comprehensible: the jook-joint bluesman who assumed with ease and unconscious dignity the role of an ambassador of the blues; the aging Mississippi Negro who was taken to the hearts of teen-age dancers in England and France. There was a certain element of hero-worship in their admiration, of course, which must have been flattering to him; but not too much, for the youths and girls who danced at the often rather squalid suburban and provincial clubs where he played seldom knew very much about him. They responded to his swinging harp and the ease with which he inspired the local bands to play better than they had ever played.

It was this simplicity of direct communication, uncluttered by the self-conscious presentation of folk festival or blues concert, that made his performances in little-known British clubs often of quite exceptional quality. There was, in fact, a closer similarity between the atmosphere of these clubs and the joints where he worked at home than might be imagined and for this reason Sonny Boy felt very much at home in them. But the local groups were often a little gauche, even if,

to his slight surprise, they knew the rhythms of his recordings and could back him up ably enough. Like Little Walter, who followed a very similar schedule of tours in Great Britain and was equally at home in their dance-halls, British Legion halls and public houses ("pubs") as was Sonny Boy, he was more generous to the young musicians than were the European critics, and he encouraged them with sympathy and enthusiasm. He shared neither color, tradition, nor even, in many parts of Europe, a word of the language of those he played with. But these barriers were broken -- they dissolved, rather -- as he cupped his hands over his harp, fluttered his fingers, and with a nod of his head and a marked beat of his foot, swung into *Bye Bye Bird*, his "theme tune" in Europe.

So, late in life, Sonny Boy Williamson was brought to Europe by distant admirers who knew him only from his recordings. Much credit is due the Belgian collector, Georges Adins, who, in 1959 sought him out in East St. Louis, Ill., visited the clubs where he was working, stayed with him at his home and, on his return to Europe, wrote what was probably the first article on the singer in the *Bulletin of the Hot Club of France*. This must have made Sonny Boy aware that there were, in countries almost beyond his knowledge, many people who knew and loved his music. When he came to visit them he proved to be a remarkable success as a musician and, while losing none of the more formidable aspects of his always uncertain temperament, he endeared himself to his audiences and won new adherents to the blues.

Sonny Boy Williamson's King Biscuit Entertainers: (l. to r.) Joe Willie Wilkins, Robert "Dudlow" Taylor, Williamson, KFFA announcer Hugh Smith, James "Peck" Curtis, Willie Love. Photo courtesy Interstate Grocery Co., Helena, Ark.



Strangely enough, he even looked the part of a blues ambassador: he had the mien of a French diplomat, the distinction of D'Annunzio, and a certain Mephistophelean wickedness in the eyes which was not at variance with the European tradition of schemers, manipulators, aesthetes and men of letters from the time of the Borgias on. Yet he was no man of letters: he was a man of the blues and if it seemed at times that he was a man of great potential whom fate had overlooked in the circumstance of a boy born in a Mississippi sharecropper's home, it was also evident that the world would have been poorer for the loss of a blues player of such originality and distinction.

Seeing him perched on the back of a chair or hovering over a microphone, Sonny Boy Williamson reminded you of a buzzard. He had the same mocking grimace, and the same cool eyes with their heavy lids, that had seen so much and which told so little. In action he unfolded slowly; did not give away all his secrets either in conversation or in music.

Instead, when he played, he built up the tension of his phrasing with slow development. One had to listen to him for quite a while, as he progressed from short bursts, single notes, punctuated phrases to filigree patterns of great complexity and richness. His large, calloused lips enfolded the cheap harps he played and he seemed to mould the notes through the long fingers of his hands, which were laid palm in palm as if he were to take a long drink of water from them. He would utter the words of his blues from the side of his mouth, slipping the harp between his lips as he finished a vocal phrase so that the melody was sustained on the instrument. When he sang his voice was husky, sometimes almost guttural, at other times near a whisper. And through everything he sang and played, his impeccable sense of timing pervaded.

Developed in a way rare even among blues singers, Sonny Boy Williamson's rhythmic sense was uncanny. He would shift his weight to one foot to leave his other foot free to tap, giving him a peculiar lurching stance. Poised like a bird of prey, he would begin to rock gently, this way and that, building up a subtle, compelling swing. His free foot would rotate instead of tap, and he had an odd way of jerking his elbows into his waist, raising and lowering his shoulders and nodding his head while his narrowed eyes and slight smile told less about him than his movements did. Then he would snap his dry fingers on the ball of his thumb with whip-cracks, clicking his tongue against his teeth in syncopation. When he became used to a microphone and developed a stage technique he would tap the microphone to produce

an explosive timing in its amplified sound. Sometimes he would place the harp between his lips and manipulate it without using his hands, snapping the fingers of both instead to a cracking rhythm.

A complete master of his instrument, he would indulge in a little showmanship, placing one end of the harp in his mouth as if it were a cigar and working it forwards and backwards to play it in this unlikely position. He carried a small harp that he could easily place inside his mouth, playing it so that no instrument was seen at all; at times, he used this one beneath his broad nostrils, holding it in his right hand while he held a large harp to his lips in his left, playing both simultaneously. Then he would laugh, a little cunningly, drop his lids and wail a forceful, overblowing chorus.

These aspects in themselves did not mean that his playing was any better, but they did indicate his great command over his harps, over his lips and breath control, and it was the combination of these that gave him the flexibility to be able to do anything he wanted on the cheapest of instruments. But the effects were good for a laugh, and to enjoy his playing to the full one had to see Sonny Boy in action as well as hear him.

Visual though his performance was, it was through a non-visual medium that he made a name for himself after playing for many years in the almost total obscurity of the jook joints of the Mississippi Delta, of Arkansas, Louisiana and Texas. In 1938, he was asked to perform on the "King Biscuit Show" sponsored by the Interstate Grocery Company and broadcast every day at 12:45 p.m. on station KFFA from Helena, Ark.

This show, which played a bigger part in the dissemination of blues in that area than has been realized and which included singers and musicians ranging from Howling Wolf to Pinetop Perkins on its roster, provided Sonny Boy intermittent employment for many years. He worked on it fairly regularly from 1941 through 1948 and it became known as "Sonny Boy's Cornmeal and King Biscuit Show." It seems possible that the "Sonny Boy" tag was applied for the purposes of the show itself: perhaps, too, the grocery associations accounted for the name "Rice" Miller. The details are not clear, but the long association with the show is an important fact of blues history in the region.

In 1945, Sonny Boy met Mattie Jones and three years later, when he was pushing fifty, they were married. They lived variously in Arkansas, Tennessee and Mississippi, Sonny Boy becoming increasingly unsettled after the destruction of his home by fire in West Memphis in 1949, an incident he describes graphically and exactly in *West*



(l. to r.) Houston Stackhouse, Sonny Boy Williamson, Peck Curtis

Memphis Blues. In Little Rock, Ark., and in Belzoni, Miss., he worked on local radio stations in the early 1950's and at this time he was at the peak of his abilities.

Three years after the death of his popular namesake in Chicago, Sonny Boy Williamson "No. 2" appeared on record. He claimed persistently that he had recorded for Vocalion in 1929 and, though he was often wayward in the details that he gave out liberally (but seldom accurately) to interviewers, he maintained an unshakeable story concerning this session. It seems likely that these were tests, probably made by the scout from Itta Bena, Ralph Lombo, and were destroyed.

The recordings made for Trumpet in 1951 and after were of outstanding quality and included, in *Mighty Long Time*, *Eyesight to the Blind* and a number of others, classics of the post-war recording era. Some were, like *Pontiac Blues*, good rocking numbers, and his last recordings, like *From the Bottom*, suggest that he was attempting to bring his blues up-to-date with a not too satisfactory excursion into the "jump" precursor of Rock n' Roll.

A few scattered recordings followed before the long contract with Checker after the "sale" of Sonny Boy to Checker by the McMurray's, who

owned Trumpet. Though some of his recordings for this Chicago-based company were somewhat banal, notably the later ones, there were many exceptional blues -- among them, *Don't Start Me to Talkin'*, *Your Funeral and My Trial* and 99 -- that were tightly-knit, well controlled and often accompanied by superior groups. The former had guitarists Muddy Waters and Jimmy Rodgers and pianist Otis Spann as distinguished company, and many of the recordings of the late fifties had excellent support from Spann, and guitarists Luther Tucker and Robert "Junior" Lockwood behind the splendid blowing and highly individual singing of the leader.

Many of these blues were most original in their words, for Sonny Boy drew on personal experience for much of his material, seldom borrowing from other singers and being gifted with an easy capacity for improvisation. This aspect of his work is well demonstrated on his recordings for Danish Storyville, *Movin' Down the River* being an impressionistic composition of free, dream-like association of which there are few instances on record. *On My Way Back Home* similarly exposes the process of improvisatory creation in the blues -- and these are rare and valuable examples.

For a while Sonny Boy remained in the South,

though the frequent trips to Chicago to record and the one-night stands and other engagements which his recordings brought him, convinced him to move North. In 1954 he took a group that included pianist Willie Love to Detroit and the following year he settled with his wife in Milwaukee, Wis., where he frequently played. The late '50s were spent playing in Chicago and Milwaukee, though he often wintered in East St. Louis.

Then, in 1963, came the invitation to appear in Horst Lippmann's American Folk Blues Festival tour of Germany, France, Holland, Denmark, Sweden and Great Britain. He was delighted and responded to the acclaim and the atmosphere. Unquestionably, he was the success of the show, as reviews in the magazines in various countries showed. In England, in particular, he was very popular and very contented, and when the rest of the company returned to the States Sonny Boy stayed on, first to tour in Poland with pianist Memphis Slim and then to return to England to tour on his own. In the English "beat" clubs -- the term refers to "beat music," not "beatnik" -- Sonny Boy felt completely at home. Their lack of any pretensions to folkiness or blues purism suited him completely and he was very much himself in these surroundings. The disparity in ages between the sexagenarian harp player and his teen-age beat accompanists never struck him as incongruous and he was anxious to return to England to live. He also, in unguarded moments, displayed a concern for the young musicians which was the more touching because the more unexpected. I recall vividly, in one instance, his anxiety in the early hours of the morning when I put him in a cab for Shepherds Bush to visit a little-known club where a group of enthusiastic youngsters had invited him to come and hear them play. His sincere desire not to disappoint them made me suddenly aware that there was a reflection of the difficulties of his own youth in his regard for their wishes.

British formal attire greatly amused Sonny Boy and he had a two-tone harlequin suit made in Charcoal grey and black at an English tailor's and, with rolled umbrella, bowler (derby) hat and kid gloves, he indulged in the gentle humour of the obvious incongruity of an American Negro blues singer dressed like a City of London financier. But the harlequin touch, the Pied Piper counterchange, was a strange hint of the man himself and of the dual nature of his career even in these latter stages. In spite of his belated fame and his European popularity Sonny Boy did not hit the "folk blues" circuit, did not get invited to Newport, did not do his stint at the Village clubs. He was a member of the 1964 European blues tour, which he opened with aplomb, but when he went back to the States he returned to

the clubs and juke joints where he had spent his whole life working.

When, early in May, 1965, Chris Strachwitz visited him in Helena, Ark., he was working the joints and still playing on the King Biscuit Show, as he had a quarter of a century before. Hardly anyone believed his story that he had been touring in Europe, though they vaguely thought he may have been in a services show. For his audiences in the Helena juke joints, he was still the hard-drinking, hard-living bluesman. They were to miss him when he died a week or two later on May 26th, 1965, and unknown to them he is mourned by friends in half a dozen countries and several thousand miles away.

As a man, Sonny Boy Williamson was something of an enigma; one of his own making perhaps, but just as puzzling nonetheless. His age, the details of his early life, even his name remain uncertain and, though he is dead, will doubtless continue to provoke argument. But about his harmonica playing and his strangely personal singing, his blues compositions and his qualities as a performer there was no question: Sonny Boy Williamson -- "Rice" Miller, if you like -- was a true original with a highly personal means of expression within the blues idiom. He was an artist of real stature and the music is the richer for his talents but sadder for their loss.

(Note: A condensed form of this article appeared as the liner - note to Blues Classics 9.)

A complete discography of Sonny Boy Williamson compiled by Kurt Mohr appeared in Blues Unlimited, No. 8; January 1964.

Additional articles and critical comments for further reading include: Ma Rencontre avec Sonny Boy Williamson, by Georges Adins, Bulletin du Hot Club de France, No. 96, March, 1960 (France); Sonny Boy Williamson, by John J. Broven, Blues Unlimited, No. 8, January, 1964; Rice Miller dit Sonny Boy Williamson No. 2, by Serge Tonneau, Rhythm and Blues Panorama, No. 30, 1964. (Belgium); Sonny Boy Williamson: The Unsolved Mystery, by Neil Slaven, and On Record -- Checker, by Mick Vernon, R & B Monthly, No. 19, August, 1965.

Essential records on long play issues: The Original Sonny Boy Williamson (Trumpet reissues), Blues Classics 9; Down and Out Blues (Checker issues), Checker LP 1437; In Memorium (sic) (Checker issues), Chess LP 1503; Sonny Boy Williamson (Danish recordings), Storyville SLP 158; Volume Two (also recorded in Denmark), Storyville SLP 170. (Note: Blues Classics Records as well as the Storyville LPs are available in the U.S. from the International Blues Record Club, Box 5073, Berkeley, Calif. 94705.)

THE DEATH OF HANK WILLIAMS

By Eli Waldron

Hank Williams, the country singer, drew his last breath at about three in the morning of January 1, 1953, leaving behind him fifteen million mourning fans of hillbilly music, a considerable fortune, a wife, an ex-wife, two children, and a devoted mother.

At the time of his unexpected demise, Williams, who for four years on radio and juke box had rivaled even the great Roy Acuff in the extent and depth of his popularity, was reclining in the back seat of an automobile on his way to a New Year's Day engagement at Canton, Ohio. The previous evening Williams's plane had been forced down at Knoxville by bad weather, and he had checked into a hotel there to get some rest. Since sleep had been denied him for several years, he at once called a physician, who at once gave him a small, easeful squirt of morphine. With the narcotic floating around inside him, smoky and cool, he managed to lie still for a few hours. Then the thin, spectral figure, six feet tall, half bald at twenty-nine, hollow-eyed and pale, staggered up out of bed and got into the hired car that was waiting for him. For exactly a year now, he had been altogether crazed by drink, narcotics, and the torture of sleeplessness.

The end of all this lay up the road just a few hours away. Two hundred miles out of Knoxville, at Oak Hill, Virginia, the chauffeur stopped the car, tried to awaken Williams, and noticed that he "felt cold." He was cold. He was dead.

The autopsy revealed traces of alcohol in Williams's veins but no sign of the sedation administered by the Knoxville physician. Nor did it reveal, as many thought it might, any residuum of the chloral hydrate the singer had been regularly consuming. After an inquest, the death of Hank Williams was put down to a heart attack.

Williams returned to his home town of Montgomery, Alabama, feet first, there to partici-



pate, in a subdued and most un-Williams-like way, in the greatest emotional orgy in the city's history since the inauguration of Jefferson Davis. Three thousand people stampeded the Municipal Auditorium to view the body and join in the keening and the wild singing, and thousands more milled around outside. Roy Acuff and his Smoky Mountain Boys were there and Ernest Tubb and Carl Smith and two or three hundred other more or less famous pickers and singers. Hank Williams's first wife, his second wife, his mother, his cousins, his son Bocephus, and his step-daughter Lycretia occupied the mourners' bench. The stage was banked with floral offerings in the shapes of guitars, wreaths, and memory pillows. The whole scene was illumined by the balefully silent explosions of flash bulbs. The photographers covered the whole thing from beginning to end, scuttling about below the stage and around the bier and the floral offerings, getting shots of the relatives in various grief-stricken poses, shots of the corpse, and shots of the preacher as he delivered the broadcast sermon. Some of these photographs were later offered for sale but were sternly suppressed by Williams' agents.

I SAW THE LIGHT

The competition to capitalize on the death of Hank Williams continued on through the exequies and long after he had been laid away for keeps. Williams had written a great number of songs -- Cold Cold Heart, Jambalaya, Your Cheating Heart, and Kawliga are a few of the titles--and most of them were hits. His gross income in 1951 was around \$175,000 and in 1952 around \$200,000. According to experts in the field of hillbilly music, he would have earned half a million dollars in 1953--that is, if he had been around to cash in on the publicity attending his death. Simply alive, he might have earned half that.

In any event, the royalties-to-be from unpublished songs and unreleased records represented an unknown but undeniably vast and mouth-watering sum of money. As an acquaintance of Williams's put it recently, "It was like a five-million-dollar horse suddenly being turned loose. That horse has been rampaging up and down the country ever since, from Shreveport to Montgomery to Nashville, tearing up the earth and raring and screaming. And everybody trying to lay hands on it at once, clawing at each other and kicking and swearing. I tell you it's so disgusting I don't even want to talk about it, don't want to think about it." He, too, was a country singer and he spoke with deep feeling. Most of the other country singers--or hillbilly singers, to use the less elegant term--felt the same way.

These "disgusting" activities had begun immediately. In Canton, for example, where he had been scheduled to appear on the afternoon of the day that turned out to be day of his death, Williams's manager, a small, dark, adaptable man, leaped nimbly and expertly into the breach, ordered a spotlight thrown on the empty stage, and called for a record of I Saw the Light, one of Williams' best-loved religious songs. The audience rose to its feet, weeping copiously, and joined in.

The move was hailed as "excellent showmanship" by the inner circle of hillbilly managers and agents who make their home in Nashville.

To the delight of a number of other interested parties, it was evident that Williams dead might be a much more valuable property than Williams alive. At any rate, more manageable. Alive he had been an irresponsible drunk, an incorrigible ego-maniac, a man who could never be relied upon to keep his engagements and who, when he kept them, would more than likely have to be propped up in the wings until it was time for him to wobble out to the microphone, and who then, to the further agony and embarrassment of bookers, managers and houseowners, might survey his audience con-



temptuously and tell them to go to hell, to go get their money back because he wasn't going to sing.

But now he was dead and safe, and the hay-making had begun. From Canton the spotlight quickly shifted to Montgomery, where after the funeral there was a free-for-all fight for Williams's briefcase, which contained one of two things -- either two or three million dollars' worth of unpublished songs or his dirty laundry. It didn't really matter which. The possession of the briefcase was of extreme importance for its strategic and symbolic value, and whoever seized it and held it -- either Williams's first wife or his second wife or his mother or his publisher. Acuff-Rose of Nashville--would stand in a strong position in the litigious huggermugger that was already beginning to shape up. Acuff-Rose came up with the briefcase and after a quick peek announced that Hank Williams had left a hundred songs to posterity. This was a surprising statement, since Williams could neither read nor write music; could, in fact, scarcely manage his own name, and was not in the habit of getting this far ahead of the game anyway. But it didn't matter--nothing mattered at this point. 1953 was destined anyway to be a great Williams year on the juke boxes. And even today, if Acuff-Rose of Nashville and M-G-M Records of New York could somehow contrive to get Williams's dirty laundry to spin at 45 RPM, they'd make a fortune on that too. Williams had ten million fans in this country and another five million abroad. They literally, quite literally, worshiped him.

HANK'S BEST GIRL

His mother, Mrs. W. W. Stone, worshiped him no less. Having interred her son, she promptly sat down with a Montgomery newspaper columnist and dashed off a two-thousand-word pamphlet with pictures, Our Hank Williams. The foreword gives the flavor of the thing: "Our Hank Williams is an account of the Drift-Cowboy's Life, as told

by his mother, Mrs. W. W. Stone to Allen Rankin. One dollar is the price placed on this booklet and it must not sell for more. Violations will be prosecuted. For copy of this booklet mail \$1 to Our Hank Williams, Montgomery, Alabama."

The story, as told to Mr. Rankin, revealed that Hank was born in 1923 in Mount Olive, Alabama, that at the age of five the family moved to Georgiana, nine miles away, where Hank sold peanuts, shined shoes, and learned to play the guitar from a Negro street singer named Teetot. At twelve, now living in Montgomery, he won an amateur-night prize at the Empire Theater with the WPA Blues and began playing the honkytonks. At thirteen he had his own string band, "The Drifting Cowboys," and a year later was playing over Montgomery's Station WSFA. At seventeen he married Audrey Shepherd, a cool-eyed blonde whom he had met while playing a medicine show at Banks, Alabama.

"I must admit I was a little jealous at times," Mrs. Stone told Mr. Rankin. "Not really. I'm joking. Hank's Mother was always his first girl, and he never forgot it. He was always as sweet and kind to me as anybody could be. He wrote many 'mother songs' to me -- Last Night I Heard You Crying In Your Sleep, I've Just Told Mama Goodbye, and many others..."

Hank and Audrey set up housekeeping with Mrs. Stone (then Mrs. Williams) and the going was rough. At nineteen, in despair, he gave up playing

altogether and took a job in a Mobile shipyard. That was 1942. But his mother had faith in him. She rented a car and went to every schoolhouse and nightclub in the Montgomery area. She booked Hank solid for sixty days. Three weeks after her son's departure for Mobile, she appeared in the shipyard with the datebook in her hand. "When Hank saw the datebook for those shows he gave me the sweetest smile I've ever seen and said, 'Thank God, Mother. You have made me the happiest boy in the world.'" And he threw away his riveting gun for good and picked up his guitar once more.

Three years later, in 1946, he had made a few recordings for an obscure company called Sterling Records, and about this time he got the break he had been waiting for. According to the Stone-Rankin pamphlet, he was joking with his wife Audrey one day and she asked him what he'd do if he came home too late and she locked him out. He thought about this for a moment and said, "I'd go out and tell that little dog to move it on over in the doghouse." And then he thought about this for a moment and sat down and picked out a "rollicking" song called Move It On Over.

He sent Move It On Over to Acuff-Rose, and the Rose half of the firm liked it and summoned the composer to Nashville. Fred Rose, an old-timer in show business and nobody's fool, said to Williams, "It's good but how do I know you wrote it? Here, I'll give you a test. Take this situation: There's a girl who marries a rich boy instead of the poor boy who lives in a cabin. Go in the

Hank Williams and His Drifting Cowboys, 1950: (l. to r.) Howard Watts (Cedric Rainwater), WSM announcer Louie Buck, Sammy Pruitt, Williams, Jerry Rivers and Don Helms



Photo courtesy John Edwards Memorial Foundation, UCLA

room there and see if you can make a song out of that." Hank went into the room, thought about this situation for a while, and emerged thirty minutes later, singing A Mansion on the Hill. This made two hits on his first day with the firm.

As Williams's publisher and the partner in one of the country's most prosperous music-publishing companies, Rose figures prominently in the Williams legend. His was the patient, unpublicized work of shaping the singer's lyrics, sharpening them, and giving them the particular timely point and barb they needed to get into the public mind and stay fastened there. Not a few people regard this as a work of genius in itself. Kawliga, for example, a tremendous hit in 1952, began with Williams as the usual dull and customary recital of unrequited love--this time among the Cherokees in Alabama--and ended with Rose as a lively little ditty about unrequited love between a pair of wooden Indians.

The rest, so to speak, is history. Williams was a great success on the "Louisiana Hayride" program over Shreveport's Station KWKH. From there he moved into Nashville on WSM's "Grand Ole Opry," which, in the country-music field, is about as big as the big time gets. He had ten million listeners to sing to every Saturday night, and during the last four years of his life there was hardly a week when he didn't have a song among the top ten in the nation.

But success destroyed him. On January 1, 1952, exactly a year before he died, he left his wife, his Cadillacs, and his fancy new Nashville home. In September he was booted out of the Grand Ole Opry and sent into that limbo from which, they say, country singers never return. Four months later he was dead.

ONE WIDOW TOO MANY

There was a great deal, of course, that Mrs. Stone did not tell Mr. Rankin--Hank's habit of packing a pistol in the back of his belt, for instance, and shooting up hotel rooms; Hank drunk and screaming, throwing wads of money on the floor and stamping on it in rage. And then she ignored Hank's second wife completely in her little biography. Shortly after leaving Nashville, Hank divorced Audrey and married a Miss Billie Jones of Houston, or perhaps Dallas, a cute little thing with two blue eyes, at least one of which was out for the future. Hank's mother did not like the second Mrs. Hank Williams, who did not care very much, in turn, for the first Mrs. Hank Williams, who did, however, in her turn harbor an affection for her former mother-in-law. The two young ladies hit the trail at about the same time after the funeral, each "singing the

songs of the deceased" for all she was worth. Dressed in cowgirl outfits, each billed herself as Mrs. Hank Williams and sang two or three painfully memorized songs in Hank's old sobbing manner to Hank's old lachrymose fans. But this was one Mrs. Hank Williams too many, even for the notoriously insatiable hillbilly circuit. Miss Billie Jones of Houston, or perhaps Dallas, fired an injunction at the first Mrs. Hank Williams, who was forced to resume her tour as Mrs. Audrey Williams. She, however, placed a sizable ad in Billboard, the amusement magazine, explaining that Audrey Williams was the one, the only, the original, the bona fide Mrs. Hank Williams.

The haymaking, in the meantime, had continued industriously in other quarters of the field. Lives and Deaths of Hank Williams blossomed on jukeboxes everywhere. In New York, hard on the heels of the pallbearers who walked Hank Williams to his grave, M-G-M Records issued an LP memorial album containing eight of Hank's greatest hits.

On the back of the album there was a facsimile of a letter dated January 1, 1953, from Frank Walker, general manager of M-G-M Records. Addressed "Mr. Hank Williams, c/o Songwriter's Paradise," it read in part:

"Dear Hank:

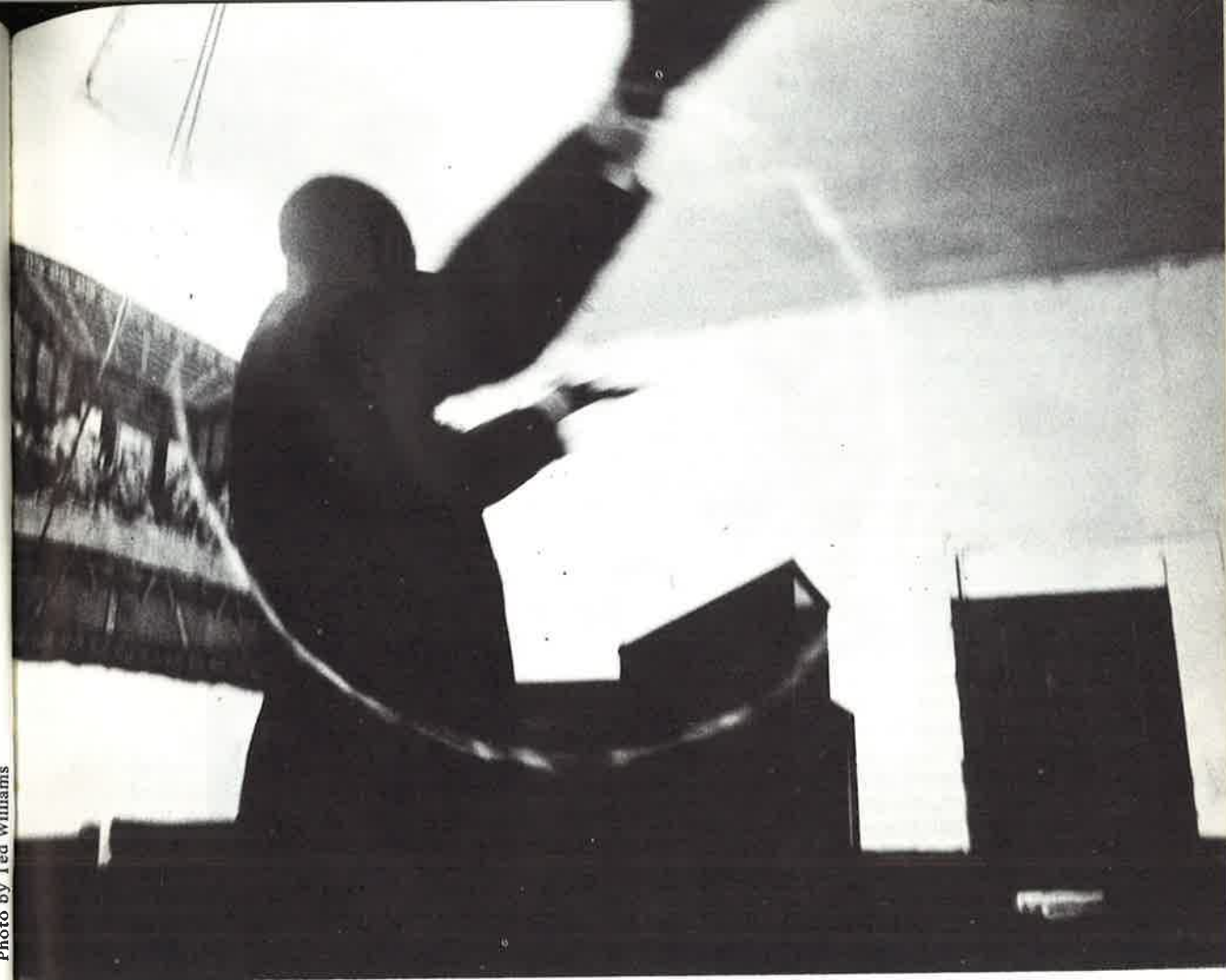
"You see it was my intention to write to you today as has been my custom for many years past... (but) an hour or so ago I received a 'phone call from Nashville. It was rather a sad call too Hank, for it told me that you had died early this morning. I don't know much about the circumstances and it really doesn't matter, does it? What does matter though is that the World is ever so much better for the fact that you have lived with us, even for such a short time....

"Remember the time the newspaper man asked you how you wrote a song? I'll never forget your answer--'I just sit down for a few minutes, do a little thinking about things, and God writes them for me.' You were so right, Hank, and do you know I think HE wanted to have you just a bit closer to him, Nashville's pretty far away, so HE just sent word this morning Hank that HE wanted you with him. You're going to be kept busy too, there's lots of work to be done way up there for we aren't improving too much here on earth. You'll be writing for the greatest singers too, the Angels, they're so wonderful--I know they'll want you to join them.

...I guess that's all I have to write about on this New Year's Day, Hank. Thanks so much for being with us, and until I see you again,

Happy New Year Hank,
Your Pal,
Frank"

Photo by Ted Williams



An Interview With Rev. F. W. McGee

by Don Kent

There is a small, modest building in the 4900 block of Vincennes Avenue on Chicago's South Side. At first glance, you would take this pleasant-looking building for an admirably preserved bungalow in a neighborhood that is fairly well-kept, but old and showing signs of deterioration. Above the double doorway, however, are raised letters reading "Church of God in Christ." A sign proclaims "All are welcome," and somehow you get the feeling that you would be very much welcomed. Finally, you may discern the cornerstone--it says simply "McGEE'S TEMPLE, A.D. 1928."

This is the church of Bishop F. W. McGee, one of the most forceful and admirable performers of

recorded Negro religious music in the history of American music. Reckoned one of the finest preachers and singers, McGee successfully captured the spirit of the Church of God in Christ in its urban surroundings during the 1920s, the so-called "Golden Age" of "race" recording (that is, recordings made specifically for Negro audiences).

Ford Washington McGee was the third of ten children, born Oct. 5, 1890, at Winchester, Tenn. His childhood was spent in Honey Grove, Texas, and later, Hillsboro, near Dallas, where his parents had farms. Like many before and after him, McGee felt the influence of religion and

music at an early age; his father played a few instruments and the McGee's were the first Negro family in Hillsboro to own a piano. The Bible exerted a particularly strong influence on him, providing a wealth of solace and inspiration.

Fortunate enough to have attended college, McGee became a teacher in Oklahoma upon the completion of his studies. About that time, the Church of God in Christ was beginning to spread its doctrines and, fascinated by its way of instruction and its music, McGee forsook his profession to become an evangelist--in fact, a faith healer. "It was a gift I had, that I was hardly aware of," he said earnestly. "And I had great success in healing sick people." Faith healing was/is a tangential aspect in the early development of a religious movement, and some of McGee's popularity can be attributed to the fact that he became well-known for the cures he was able to effect, holding special afternoon prayer services for those seeking help.

But it was the music that drew them. The music of the Church of God in Christ was lively, up-tempo, and essential to the services. Under the influence of the music, a feeling of divinity would capture the participants, causing them to dance by themselves, to shout, praise, ejaculate and refuse to stand still. Attributing this to the pervading power of the Holy Ghost, the members of the Church of God in Christ called themselves "Sanctified" and, with their music, caused a minor revolution in the world of religion. McGee said that during the early days of the Church of God in Christ, it was commonly held that no intelligent people were in the sanctified church (and it is more than likely that this animated, demonstrative way of worship was much more popular at a grass-roots level than in more urban centers; most of the churches, McGee said, were in the country). This misconception, McGee says, was promulgated by other churches to put a stigma on the Sanctified churches that were drawing parishioners away from more staid methods of worship.

It is easy to see the attraction that the Church of God in Christ held. Outside of the individual guitarists, blues-singers-cum-reverends, and the occasional Blind Willie Johnson, Rev. Clayborn, Blind Gussie Nesbitt, there are no more dynamic performances in religious music than those produced by the Church of God in Christ (Elders McIntorsh & Edwards, Bessie Johnson, Elder Curry, among others) and other sanctified groups (Rev. D. C. Rice). Over all, it could be said that religious music in the 1920s marked a high-water mark that was never again surpassed and only rarely equaled in quantity or quality. Before it turned into a mass-produced industry, an ex-

citing, vibrant, spontaneous and moving sound was produced.

With the help of Arizona Dranes, the blind female pianist from Dallas, McGee firmly established headquarters in Oklahoma City. "They could no longer say the Church of God in Christ was for the ignorant," he laughed, "once I, a college man, took command." McGee started traveling throughout the South and West, healing, preaching, singing; often he had the help of Dranes, and he was meeting other preachers such as Elder Curry, a pastor from Jackson, Miss., who made some beautiful recordings for Okeh. All the while, McGee was picking up many of the new songs that were being created, learning older ones and even making a few himself (Jesus, He Is the Saviour for Me, Vi-20858).



Rev. F.W. McGee

One of his greatest early triumphs came when he was sent to Des Moines, Iowa, to seek converts. The total membership of the Church in God of Christ in Des Moines at the time was two. Success was immediate. Bringing his musicians with him, McGee soon had a fervent congregation. He recalled, "They came from all over to hear me. They came on wagons, and horses even on cots!" So successful was his demonstration, police were needed to handle the large crowds. For his achievement, McGee was made Bishop of Iowa.

For all his success, McGee still lacked a church of his own. Though he worked in Oklahoma and Iowa, he was content to remain an evangelist. In 1925, he finally hit Chicago, setting up a tent on the corner of 33rd St. and Prairie Ave. With a mixture of nostalgia and amusement, he explained his overwhelming prosperity, "The whole Church was something new; it was like a circus." McGee's popularity became so great he incurred the displeasure of the then Bishop of Illinois. The people clamored for McGee's impassioned preaching. C. Mason, the founder of the Church of God in Christ, whom McGee calls one of the greatest preachers of all time, decided McGee should stay in Chicago and appointed him bishop over his previous superior.



Photos by Ted Williams

Every year, at Thanksgiving, McGee said, the Church of God in Christ used to hold (and still does) a gathering in Memphis, drawing upwards of 5000 members. It was chiefly a period of exhausting religious services and singing, but it also served to disperse songs that were created by parishioners. Every group would bring the songs being sung in its area and exchange them for different spirituals prevalent elsewhere. It was at one of these yearly gatherings that Dranes asked McGee to accompany her to her next recording session for Okeh.* McGee picked out the best singers in his congregation and in November, 1926, the session was held with McGee and group in support. Apparently, Okeh was impressed with McGee, as they asked him to return to make a record on his own. The resulting session produced The Lion and the Tribe of Judah, which sold phenomenally well.

One of the A&R men who produced the McGee session also worked as a talent scout for Victor; he was impressed enough to go to Ralph Peer, who handled the race series for Victor, and to mention McGee to him. Peer, always on the lookout for new talent, was sufficiently interested to ask McGee and his singers to audition. Their performance amazed Peer, and they were recorded almost immediately.

* Dranes' second recording session for Okeh was held in early November, before the usual Memphis gathering. Since McGee and Dranes were usually in touch with one another, it was probably some time earlier than the Thanksgiving meeting that Dranes asked McGee to assist her.

McGee speaks highly of Peer, as did a lot of the artists who worked for him; they got along very well. McGee was startled to find out how well his records were doing after he made the first few sessions. Normally, McGee was paid \$25 a side, but once convinced that he was really a hit, he refused to sign any contract until Peer set a



price of \$100 a side, McGee's popularity was undeniable. He recorded 46 sides over three years for Victor, all but three being released.

Although McGee reputedly played fine piano, he says he does not recall being recorded playing. Most of the time his good friend Rev. D. C. Williams was the pianist. McGee did not have any special group that accompanied him. He drew from among the worshippers of his church, choosing those singers and musicians he liked, normally changing them from session to session. He drew upon the wealth of songs he had by this time absorbed, preferring the lively ones to those "in waltz-time". Various combinations of piano, cornet, drums, bass, guitar(s), tambourine, violin, trombone and trumpet were used in accompaniment.

McGee became Bishop of New York late in 1929 and his last three sessions were recorded there, using entirely different personnel from his Chicago dates. The record business was beginning to feel the effects of the depression by June, 1930, and Victor did not pick up his option after that date. Ironically enough, McGee's greatest side was produced at the final session, the powerful and spirited 50 Miles of Elbow Room (Vi-23401, reissued on Folkways). McGee had not even known it had been released and hadn't heard it until a few months ago.

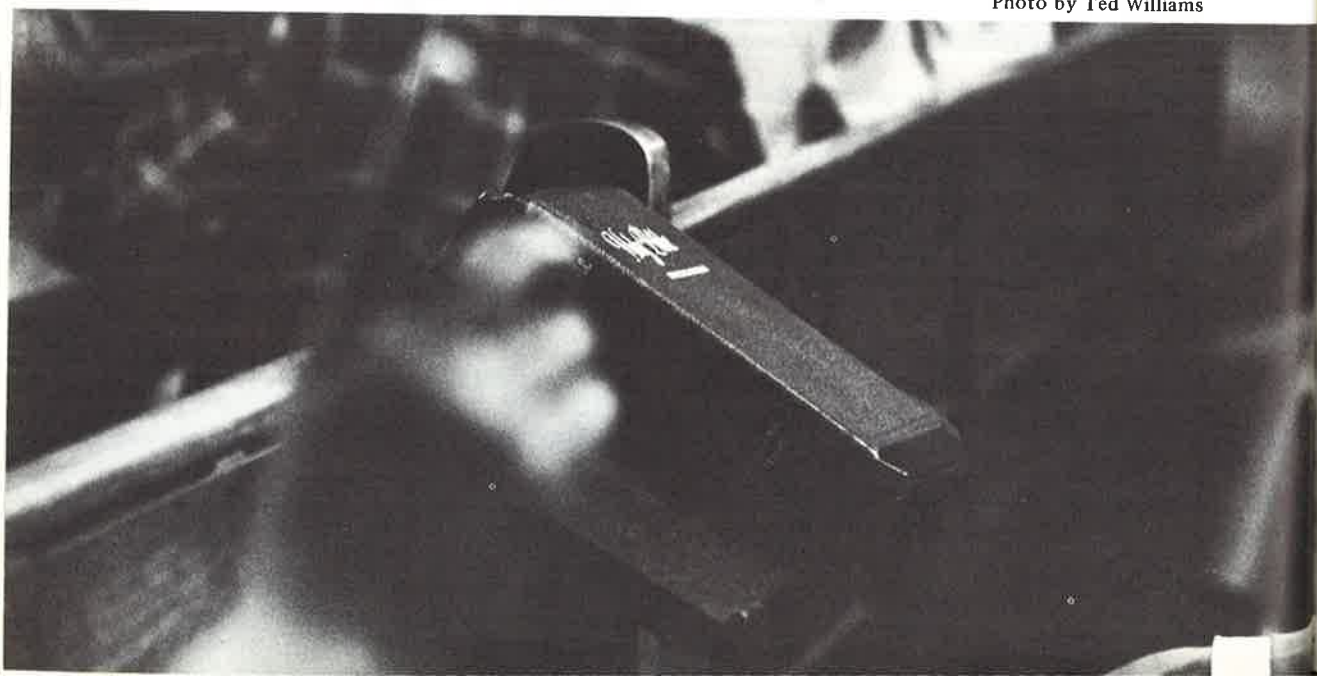
Recording had been only a small part of McGee's life, though it had been a part he enjoyed immensely. Disappointed by Victor's failure to contact him again, he made no effort to return to the recording studio again. There were other things to do; trips to Jerusalem and Mexico as well as ever-increasing responsibilities in the church.

Like many other preachers, McGee frowns on "the carnality of blues songs," though he recognizes the bond between blues and religious music. He remembers the early traveling musicians with their mixed wares, he saw as a youth in Texas. The Church of God in Christ had employed its particular musical form of worship long before he joined them, and he admits that the same impetus that gave form to the blues was also responsible for the lively method of worship that made the Church of God in Christ different from other churches.

Although plagued by recurring illness, McGee is tremendously hardy and active for all his seventy-six years. His memory and intelligence still keen and his wit and appreciation of living undiminished, he is a most enjoyable conversationalist. He still preaches and sings occasionally at the church on Vincennes, though his son usually handles the parish. The membership has been falling off in recent years; most of them have been sanctified for many years and today's "cool" urbanites have little sympathy for the old spontaneous style of worship. It was partially the depression, McGee thinks; zealotry was an easy thing to lose in hard times. The novelty's gone, he says, and the music is calmer compared to the lustier aspects of earlier years.

McGee has been luckier than many. Most of his brothers and sisters, as well as his sons and daughters, have gone into education, probably partially inspired by their relation to Booker T. Washington. His youngest brother, Henry McGee, today runs the Chicago Post Office and McGee is justly proud of the fact. "There wasn't much a Negro could do in my day, but times are changing now" he says. "I don't regret it, I'd do it over again."

Photo by Ted Williams



The Words



Drawing by Warren Hughey

For students of folksong and the processes of folksong composition and re-composition, the large numbers of commercial phonograph recordings by authentic folk performers, Negro and white (or "race" and "hillbilly"), made beginning in 1923 and extending through the early '30s, furnish a valuable, ready-made body of data for investigation and study. One of the most fascinating as well as challenging areas for study is that of folk composition -- that is, the handling along already established traditional lines of new thematic materials, adapting or otherwise accommodating new themes to traditional forms, models and practices. It is here that the phonograph record can furnish particularly valuable insights since, as is well known, a large number of newly-composed songs, often celebrating such newsworthy events as mining disasters, air crashes, kidnappings, earthquakes, and the like (these songs were called "tragedies" by recording officials of the day), were introduced to the folk audience.

This "broadside" tradition (for as such must the phonograph recording be viewed) exerted a powerful effect upon folksong traditions, as might be expected, given the prestige and wide, rapid dissemination that recordings enjoyed. Thanks to the phonograph, songs entered the folk stream in large numbers and were subjected in turn to much the same kinds of usage, erosion and attrition that have been operative upon the broadside song for centuries. Some of the new songs were absorbed whole into the traditional stream (and have cropped up, for example, in various folksong collections made since their introduction), others were discarded, while still others under-

went changes of varying degrees and kinds at the hands of those who heard, remembered and re-created the new songs the records had brought them.

One of the largest bodies of newly-composed "tragedies" followed in the wake of the terrible devastating Mississippi River floods of 1927. The event was commented upon in a raft of recordings by both hillbilly and race artists (as well as by a few "popular" stylists) in the months following the floods. The differences in treatment -- in focus, tone and, in fact, in just about every significant aspect -- between the songs of the white and Negro composer-performers is striking indeed and offers important clues to the differing cultural backgrounds and values that each group brought to the subject and its handling. Moreover, these differences in treatment furnish valuable insights into the very nature of the traditions into which the new materials were being fitted. The contrasts are best seen in the songs themselves, the transcription of a number of which follow.

A straightforward narration of the event is furnished in Arthur Fields' The Terrible Mississippi Flood, which he performed -- to violin and piano accompaniment -- on Radiex 2334:

Down in the sunny Southland, where the
Mississippi flows,
The skies were fair, and the people there were
living in sweet repose,
Till the father of the waters arose in angry
might,
And overflowed its muddy banks; 'twas an

awe-inspiring sight.

The people were horror-stricken when they realized their plight,
And many were drowned without a chance of putting up a fight,
Thousands were forced to flee for their lives and their happy homes forsake,
While the rushing water left its toll of destruction in its wake.

Here was a land where all was peace a few short hours before,
Turned into a land of horror with the Angel of Death at each door,
While the cruel waters were rising, thousands of men were on hand,
Struggling in vain to build up the levees with millions of bags of sand.

A lot of men lost all they had, their homes and loved ones gone,
The hearts of a nation were beating for them, as they tried to carry on.
Just picture the mother who lost her babe, perhaps her husband too,
Try and put yourself right in her place and imagine what you would do.

Think of the poor little boys and girls who are now left all alone,
Little orphans of Dixieland, without the shelter of home,
Let's hope this great stream can be harnessed, so its name won't be written in blood,
In the heart of a grieving survivor of the Mississippi flood.

The late Ernest "Pop" Stoneman recorded, on Victor 20671-B, a song on the subject, The Story of the Mighty Mississippi, which had been written by another folk performer, Kelly Harrell:

Way out in the Mississippi valley, just among those plains so grand,
Rolled the flooded Mississippi River, destroying the works of man.

With her waters at the highest that all men have ever known,
She came sweeping through the valleys, and destroying lands and homes.

There were children clinging in the treetops who had spent a sleepless night,
And without a bit of shelter, or even a spark of light.

With their prayers going up to the Father for the break of day to come,
That they might see some rescue party who would provide for them a home.

There were some of them on the housetops with no way to give an alarm,
There were mothers wading in the water with their babies in their arms.

Let us all get right with our Maker, as He doeth all things well,
And be ready to meet in judgment when we bid this earth farewell.

The moral conclusion of the Stoneman-Harrell song is typical of the hillbilly approach to such matters, and is echoed in numerous songs of the period dealing with like tragic events. Compare the final stanza of The Mississippi Flood, written by the prodigious composer Carson J. Robison and performed by the popular tenor Vernon Dalhart (Marion Try Slaughter) on Regal Zonophone EE 55:

Another great disaster has come upon our land,
Down where the Mississippi flows on its way so grand.
The springtime flowers were blooming, the world was bright and gay,
And folks along the levee were happy all the day.

And the skies grew cloudy and rain came falling down,
For days a mighty torrent came pouring to the ground,
The streams throughout the country kept swelling day by day,
Until the angry river was roaring on its way.

And then there came a warning, "The levee cannot stand!"
And brave men fought and struggled to save their native land.
But still the raging water kept pounding at the shore,
Until it broke the levee and through the country tore.

Oh, many lives were taken and brave men knelt to pray,
As all that they had cherished was madly swept away.
The world will gladly help them to pay the awful cost,
But gold can never bring them the loved one who is lost.

We can't explain the reason these great disasters come,
But we must all remember to say, "Thy will be done,"
And though the good may suffer for other people's sins,
There is a crown awaiting where eternal life begins.

Negro treatments of the theme differ greatly. They present much more immediately subjective accounts, as though the singer is speaking directly to us of events which are going on at the moment and in which he (or she) is intimately involved. Sippie Wallace, for example, pulls us directly into her plight in The Flood Blues, recorded on Okeh 8470, as she sings:

I'm standing in this water, wishing I had a boat, (2)
The only way I see is to take my clothes and float.

The water is rising, people fleeing for the hills, (2)
Lord, the water will obey if You just say, "Be still."

They sent out a law for everybody to leave town, (2)
But when I got the news I was high-water bound.

They dynamited the levee, thought it might give us ease, (2)
But the water's still rising, doing as it please.

I called on the good Lord, and my man too, (2)
What else is there for a poor girl to do?

The popular Texas bluesman Blind Lemon Jefferson's Rising High Water Blues (Paramount 12487) likewise draws us into the midst of an ongoing situation:

Backwater rising, southern people can't make no time,
I said, backwater rising, southern people can't make no time,
And I can't get no hearing from that missing girl of mine.

Wailing in Arkansas, people screaming in Tennessee,
O-o-o-h, people screaming in Tennessee,
If I don't leave Memphis, backwater been all over poor me.

People say it's raining, it has been for nights and days,
People say it's raining, has been for nights and days,
Thousand people stands on the hill, looking down where they used to stay.

Children standing and screaming, "Mama, we ain't got no home,
O-o-o-h, mama, we ain't got no home!"
Papa says to children, "Backwater left us all alone."

Backwater rising, come in my windows and door,
The backwater rising, come in my windows and door,
I leave with a prayer in my heart, backwater won't rise no more.

Another sharply-etched scene is that depicted in Lonnie Johnson's Broken Levee Blues, recorded in San Antonio by the popular singer-guitarist for Okeh Records, and issued as Okeh 8618. To a masterful guitar accompaniment Johnson sings dolefully and with great force:

I want to go back to Helena, the high water's got me bogged, (2)
I woke up early this morning, high water all in my back yard.

They want me to work on the levee, I had to leave my home,
They want me to work on the levee, then I had to leave my home,
I was so scared the levee might break out and I may drown.

The water was 'round my windows and backing all up in my door,
The water was all up 'round my windows and backing all up in my door,
I rather to leave my home, 'cause I can't live there no more.

The police run me from Cairo all through Arkansas,
The police run me out from Cairo all through Arkansas,
And put me in jail behind those cold iron bars.

The police say, "Work, fight or go to jail";
I say, "I ain't toting no sack, (2)
And I ain't building no levee; the planks is hanging down, and I ain't driving no nails."

Another powerful treatment of the subject is that by Kansas Joe McCoy and his wife Memphis Minnie McCoy, When the Levee Breaks (Columbia 14439-D). Over the brisk, propulsive interplay of their two guitars, the couple sing:

If it keeps on raining', levee's goin' to break, (2)
And the water goin' to come in, an' I have no place to stay.

Now, look here, mama, what am I to do? (2)
I ain't got nobody (to) tell my troubles to.

I works on the levee, mama, both night an' day, (2)
I ain't got nobody keep the water away.

Oh, cryin' won't help you, prayin' won't do no good, (2)
When that levee break, mama, you got to move.

I works on the levee, mama, both night an' day, (2)
So work so hard, keep the water away.

I had a woman, she wouldn't do for me, (2)
I'm goin' back to my used-to-be.

Oh, mean old levee, cause me to weep an' moan,
It's a mean old levee, cause me to weep an' moan,
Cause me to leave my baby an' my happy home.

Charley Patton, the well-known patriarch of the Mississippi Delta blues, recorded a two-sided disc about the floods, High Water Everywhere (Paramount 12909):

The back water done rose all around Sumner,
Lord, drove me down the line,
Back water done rolled around Sumner, drove poor Charley down the line,
Well, I tell the world the water done struck through this town.

Lord, the whole round country, Lord, creek water is overflowed,
Lord, the whole round country, man, is overflowed,
(Spoken: You know I can't stay here; I'm bound to go where it's high, boy.)
I would go to the hill country, but they got me barred.

Now, looky here now, Leland, Lord, river was rising high,
Looky here, boys, around Leland tell me river is ragin' high,
(Spoken: Boy, it's rising over there. Yeah.)
I'm going to move over to Greenville, 'fore I say "Goodbye."

Looky here, the water dug out, Lordy, something broke, rolled 'most everywhere,
The water at Greenville and Leland, Lord, it done rose everywhere,
(Spoken: Boy, you can't never stay here.)
I would go to Rosedale, but they tell me there's water there.

Now the water now, mama, done struck Charley's town,
Well, they tell me the water sure struck Charley's town,
(Spoken: Boy, I'm going to Vicksburg.)
Well, I'm going to Vicksburg, 'fore I have mine.

I am going up that water where land don't never flow,
Well, I'm going over the hill where water, oh, it don't never flow,
(Spoken: Boy, hit Sharkey County and everything was down in Stovall.)

But that county was leavin' over that Tallahatchie shore.
(Spoken: Boy, went to Tallahatchie and got it over there.)

Lord, the water done rushed all over that old Jackson road,
Lord, the water done raised up over the Jackson road,
(Spoken: Boy, it got in my claw.)
I'm going back to the hill country, won't be worried no more.

Back water at Bytheville, backed up all around,
Back water at Bytheville, done took Joiner town,
It was fifty families and children come to sink and drown.

The water was rising up in my friend's door, (2)
The man said to his womenfolk, "Lord, we'd better go."

The water was rising, got up in my bed,
Lord, the water was rolling, got up to my bed,
I thought I would take a trip, Lord, out on the days I slept.

Oh, I can hear the horn blow, water upon my door,
(Spoken: Blowing . . .)
I hear the ice, Lord, Lord, was sinking down,
I couldn't get no boat there, Marion City had gone down.

Oh, the water was rising, and we're sinking down,
And the water was rising at places all around,
(Spoken: Boy, they's all around.)
It was fifty men and children come to sink and drown.

Oh, Lordy, women and grown men down,
Oh, women and children sinking down,
(Spoken: Lord, have mercy!)
I couldn't see nobody home, and wasn't no one to be found.

One of the better-known of the songs dealing with the tragedy--at least it has been collected from a number of bluesmen since -- was that performed by singer and 12-string guitarist Robert Hicks, who recorded as "Barbecue Bob." His ironic, almost light-hearted treatment of the theme, delivered over a brooding, dark accompaniment, was Mississippi Heavy Water Blues, issued on Columbia 14222-D:

I was walking down the levee, with my head hanging low,
Looking for my sweet mama, but she ain't here no mo',
That's why I'm crying, Mississippi heavy water blues.

Lord, Lord, Lord, I'm so blue, my house got washed away,
And I'm crying how long 'fore another pay day?
That's why I'm crying, Mississippi heavy water blues.

I'm sitting here looking at all this mud,
And my gal got washed away in that Mississippi flood,
That's why I'm crying, Mississippi heavy water blues.

I hope she come back some day kind and true,
Can't no one satisfy her like her sweet papa do,
That's why I'm crying, Mississippi heavy water blues.

I think I heard a moan on that Arkansas side,
Crying how long before sweet mama ride?
That's why I'm crying, Mississippi heavy water blues.

I'm in Mississippi with mud all in my shoes,
My gal's in Louisiana with those high water blues,
That's why I'm crying, Mississippi heavy water blues.
(Spoken: Lord, send me a sweet mamal)

Got plenty mud and water, don't need no wood or coal,
All I need some sweet mama to slip me jelly-roll.
That's why I'm crying, Mississippi heavy water blues.

Nothing but mud and water as far as I could see,
I need some sweet mama, come and shake that thing with me,
That's why I'm crying, Mississippi heavy water blues.

Listen here, you men, one more thing I'd like to say,
Ain't no women out here, they all got washed away,
That's why I'm crying, Mississippi heavy water blues.

Lord, Lord, Lord, Mississippi's shaking,
Louisiana's sinking,
The whole town's a-sinking, Robert Hicks is singing,
That's why I'm crying, Mississippi heavy water blues.

A number of other songs were written by various folk composers to commemorate the tragedy, among them George Carter's Rising

River Blues (Paramount 12750), Big Bill Broonzy's Southern Flood Blues (Perfect 7-04-68), Moses Mason's Red Cross the Disciple of Christ Today (Paramount 12601), and Mattie Delaney's localized treatment Tallahatchie River Blues (Vocalion 1480). The cost in lives and property was inestimable and, as a result, the federal government embarked on a project of flood control and land reclamation. It took a while to bring the project to completion, however, and the annual flooding continued and, with it, songs about the personal and general tragedies the floods occasioned. Lonnie Johnson made a virtual career of performing flood songs, recording six of them between 1927 and 1938. As late as 1937, James "Kokomo" Arnold was able to record his Wild Water Blues on Decca 7285. Over his slide guitar, he sang:

I woke up this morning, I couldn't even get outa my door, (2)
Say, this wild water got me covered and I ain't got no place to go.

Now, I hear my mother crying' but I just can't help myself, (2)
Now, if this wild water keep risin', I gotta get help from someone else.

Now, good morning, Mr. Wild Water, why did you stop in my front door? (2)
Said, you reaches from Cairo clean down into the Gulf of Mexico.

Now, don't you hear your mother cryin', weepin' and moanin' all night long? (2)
'Cause Old Man Wild Water done been here, took her best friends and gone.

Now, looka here, Mr. Wild Water, why do you treat me so doggone mean? (2)
Say, you took my house outa Cairo, carried it down in New Orleans.

Arnold's piece possibly represents the last gasp of the tradition, however. When the great Mississippi and Missouri River floods of 1951 and 1952 took place, they passed unnoticed and unmarked by the bluesman or the folk composer. The music had changed with the times and, with it, went the interest in topical song. Once a flourishing part of the world of commercial folk-song, "tragedies" and other topical songs are only rarely heard nowadays. An occasional country-and-western performer makes comment in song on the passing scene, but the bluesman seems even less concerned with making topical commentary. While there were a large number of gospel-song tributes to John F. Kennedy following his assassination, there were no commercially-issued blues laments on his death. But that's another matter, to be taken up in a later issue.

LESTER MELROSE:
AN APPRECIATION

By Bob Koester



Lester Melrose

It long has been my belief that the blues of the 1930s and early 1940s--an important period of amalgamation of rural blues and jazz influences into modern Chicago style--have not been as popular among blues fans as they deserve. Even more surprising, they have received little attention and study on the part of blues scholars. Instead of analyzing the music of this period, their tendency has been to speak of a "Bluebird Sound," of pat recording formulas, and to express a certain dissatisfaction with the music of the period--since it does not measure up to their standards of excellence for country blues or the later electronic blues.

The truth, I feel, lies in the fact that the blues of this middle period not only gave birth to the subsequent modern style but had a definite, distinctive style of its own. It might be argued that this style did not exist outside the recording studio. (In this respect, I have been struck by the fact that the small-group recordings of the late '30s and early '40s seem to appeal to jazz or blues fans rather than to folk-oriented listeners.) It should be noted, however, that some of the bigger stars of the "Melrose Period"--such as Big Bill Broonzy, Lonnie Johnson and Rossevelt Sykes, to mention but three very dissimilar artists--did actually lead their own units in South Side Chicago clubs.

Lester Melrose's full story could shed light on this very important period of blues history. No doubt his early contact with jazz musicians from New Orleans--as well as pressures from the competing group, the Harlem Hamfats--had considerable influence on his decision to use New Orleans accompanists such as Ransom Knowling, Judge Lawrence Riley, Lee Collins, Punch Miller and many others on his recording sessions as frequently as possible. Melrose, it must be remembered, was a music publisher and his primary interest in promoting blues recording sessions seems to have been to enlarge the Wabash and Duchess Music catalogs he operated. In so doing, he became a powerful figure on the Chicago recording scene, first establishing himself as blues recording director at the American Record-

ing Corp. (later Vocalion) by the mid-'30s, taking over in this same capacity at RCA Victor's Bluebird operation in 1938 when Eli Oberstein, who preceded him in the job, was promoted to the supervision of popular music recording.

Melrose's early experience with the blues was with Gennett and the various dime-store labels operated by ARC in the late '20s and early '30s. Before the end of his long career (still working with Columbia and Victor, higher-priced parent labels of Okeh and Bluebird) he did a few sessions for independent labels (Bullet and MGM) and recorded Muddy Waters for the first time after the bluesman had moved from Mississippi to Chicago. (Ed. Note: Three titles were recorded on Sept. 27, 1946 at Columbia's studios in Chicago: Jitterbug Blues, Hard Days Blues and Burying Ground Blues. These important, germinal Waters recordings have never been issued.)

The importance of Lester Melrose in the history of blues recording was most dramatically demonstrated by the immediacy of change in recorded blues styling when he retired in the early '50s. This period marked the end of major-label influence in the R&B field and signaled the beginning of the mighty Chess empire. I think of this as marking the changing of the guard. I am told that the decision was made because of Melrose's injury in an accident, but doubtless by this time he must have been tired of the hustle and bustle of the recording scene.

Lester Melrose is remembered with unusual fondness by the artists he recorded. There are noticeably fewer complaints of sharp practices and frequent praise of his musical perceptions and social attitudes. A picture emerges of his working on the WPA in the same gang as Broonzy, of patience and understanding in the recording studios, of hard-drinking socializing with his musicians, of his presence at the lively rehearsals at Tampa Red's house and of his readiness to come across with hard cash to relieve stranded, arrested or deprived artists. No doubt Melrose limited his benevolence to those musicians who showed greatest promise as song-writers and recording artists but his integrity and informal spirit are so well remembered by his artists that he must be a heck of a guy and I hope to meet him one of these days--I believe it would be like meeting an old friend whom one hasn't seen in many years.

Perhaps at some future date Mr. Melrose will be able to enlighten us further on the mysterious period of the late '30s and early '40s during which he left such an indelible imprint on the blues and on the memories of all the artists with whom he associated.

--Bob Koester.

My Life in Recording

By Lester Melrose

I was born Dec. 14, 1891, on a farm in southeast Illinois, about ten miles east of Olney. When I reached the age of fifteen we moved to Sumner, Ill.

While there I worked at my dad's livery stable, from there moved to a job in a grocery store and also was catcher on the town baseball team. We had a great pitcher, so Henderson, Ky., signed us to a contract to play in the K.I.T. League. The league broke up a year later.

I got a job as a fireman on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, firing their compound engines, and that job lasted until they found out I was under twenty-one years of age. From there I decided to go to Chicago, because my brother was there and had a good job at Marshall Field's (a large department store) at about \$15 per week. That was in 1912. I landed there and got a job at Rothschild's department store at \$9 per week. In 1914 I opened my own grocery and market at the corner of 37th St. and Vincennes Ave. That store was still there about ten years ago.

In May of 1918 I was called into the service and was shipped to France and thence to the front in August, 1918. I lost everything I had in the sale of the store. I arrived back in Chicago in June, 1919.

In 1922 my brother and I opened a small music store at 6309 Cottage Grove Ave. At that time the music business was very slow. We carried a full stock of pop sheet music, piano rolls, small musical instruments and records. Emerson and Gennett were the only records we could purchase at that time, so the going was pretty rough. Our rent was \$40 per month and when the Tivoli Theater opened a few doors south of us the rent went to \$350 per month!

Business boomed and word got around to the record and music publishing companies that we were doing a tremendous business. Our store was too small to handle our business so we moved



Blues singer Lonnie Johnson

across the street to 6318 Cottage Grove Ave. This store was 20 by 80 feet. The Victor, Columbia and Brunswick record companies each had an agency in our territory, so we were unable to buy records directly from them.

However, within three months we carried a full line of their pop records, along with Gennett, Emerson, Okeh and, a little later, Paramount. In the meantime we were getting inquiries from various composers, including colored, about publishing their music or getting it recorded on phonograph records. It was impossible for us to publish pop tunes at that time, so we decided to take a whirl at the blues. The blues selections started coming in and we soon had ten or twelve selections that we thought were good material.

In the meantime, King Oliver arrived with his New Orleans Jazz Band and opened up at the Lincoln Gardens at 31st St. and Cottage Grove Ave. Louis Armstrong was playing second cornet for the King, with Johnny Dodds on clarinet. We had arrangements made on three selections--one was Wolverine Blues--for the King, and his band featured them every night. Wolverine Blues was making a hit there, so we convinced the Gennett record company they should record King Oliver. The recording was made in Richmond, Ind., and the first pressings were released about three weeks later. King's first record featured Wolverine Blues and Dipper Mouth Blues, the latter being composed by Oliver. The title was later changed to Sugar Foot Stomp. (Ed. Note: Mr. Melrose is in error here. Oliver and his band did not record Wolverine Blues at this Gennett session or, for that matter, at any other recording session. During 1923 three Oliver recording dates were held in Richmond, at which seventeen selections were waxed, all but three being issued. Wolverine was not one of these seventeen titles. Dipper Mouth Blues was recorded at Oliver's second session, in April, 1923, and was coupled with Weather Bird Rag, recorded at the same session.)

The record was selling well at our store and soon Columbia and Victor outlets were getting plenty of calls for a record by King Oliver. One

day a man wearing a Western-style hat with a red bandanna around his neck walked into our store and announced that he was Jelly Roll Morton, the greatest stomp and blues piano player this side of New Orleans. Cassius Clay had nothing on Jelly Roll!

He had a flock of numbers, including Milenberg Joys, Al Short and his tivoli Orchestra were featuring several of our blues selections and we arranged for the orchestra to go to New York to record for Vocalion Records. They were called the Tivoli Syncopators, and Wayne King was the lead sax player. They recorded eight selections, including four of our blues numbers. Wolverine Blues was their best seller. (Ed. Note: Among other selections recorded by the 15-piece band at its March, 1923, session were Bugle Call Rag, Sobbin' Blues and Long-Lost Mama.)

Later we recorded the Friars Inn Orchestra for Gennett Records and a few weeks later recorded the New Orleans Rhythm Kings for the same label. The New Orleans Rhythm Kings made a big hit with all musicians with their Tin Roof Blues. The clarinet solo by Leon Rappolo was something to listen to! (Ed. Note: The front line of Rappolo, cornetist Paul Mares and trombonist George Brunies was present in both of these important groups.) Our store was headquarters for many musicians, who came in to listen to the various new records being released.

In 1926 I sold my interest in Melrose Bros. Music Co. to my brother Walter. I started out on my own, and things were pretty rough for a few years. I recorded the Jelly Roll Morton Trio on Victor Records, and the first record was a tremendous seller. The trio consisted of Jelly Roll on piano, Johnny Dodds on clarinet and his brother Baby on drums. I recorded a number of blues for Gennett Records and a few for Paramount. I believe it was in the later part of 1928 that I met up with Thomas Dorsey, who was quite a composer as well as the leader of the Hokum Boys. They recorded the selections Beedle Um Bum and Sellin' That Stuff on Paramount and the record was a tremendous seller. About a year later McKinney's Cotton Pickers recorded the same selections for RCA Victor. I also recorded Big Bill Broonzy on Paramount and Gennett Records.

In 1930 I received a request from the American Record Corp. to record some of my blues talent. This company had various labels for chain stores. I got together a dozen musicians and vocal artists and went to New York City and recorded about thirty selections for them. The vocalists consisted of the Famous Hokum Boys (Georgia Tom Dorsey, piano; Big Bill Broonzy and Frank Brasswell, guitars). The records turned out very well and I made several more trips with artists to New York

for recording sessions. There was very little recording being done in 1932 and 1933 due to the effects of the Depression.

However, in February of 1934, taverns were opening up and nearly all of them had juke-boxes for entertainment. I sent a letter, which was just a feeler, to both RCA Victor and Columbia Records, explaining that I had certain blues talent ready to record and that I could locate any amount of rhythm-and-blues talent to meet their demands. They responded at once with telegrams and long-distance phone calls. From March, 1934, to February, 1951, I recorded at least 90 percent of all rhythm-and-blues talent for RCA Victor and Columbia Records.

Along with the Famous Hokum Boys and Big Bill Broonzy, I recorded Washboard Sam, the Yas Yas Girl (Merline Johnson), Tampa Red, Lil Green, the Four Clefs, Big Boy Crudup, St. Louis Jimmy, Roosevelt Sykes, Memphis Minnie, Curtis Jones, the State Street Ramblers, Roy Palmer, Jimmy Yancey, Joe Williams, Walter Davis, Sonny Boy Williamson, Doctor Clayton, Lonnie Johnson, Peter Chatman (Memphis Slim), Tommy McClennan, Big Maceo Merriweather, Amos (Bumble Bee Slim) Easton, the Cats and the Fiddle, the Dixie Four, Leroy Carr, Junie Cobb, Lovin' Sam Theard, Jimmy Blythe, Victoria Spivey, Johnny Temple, Dorothy Donegan, the Big Three Trio (Leonard Caston, piano; Bernard Dennis or Ollie Crawford, guitar; Willie Dixon, bass), Jazz Gillum, and many others.

I retired from the music business in February, 1951, and at the time was living in Tucson, Ariz. I moved back to Chicago in 1954 and was contacted at once by Steve Sholes of RCA Victor. He informed me that a fellow by the name of Elvis Presley had recorded one of my blues selections on the Sun label and that the record was selling like wild-fire. The selection was That's All Right (composed by Arthur Crudup), and that is the selection that got Presley off to a good start. Even though I have never met Elvis Presley or talked to him on the phone, he did record two more of my selections. I suggested to Steve Sholes that he should have some of his talent, such as Hank Snow or Eddie Arnold, record That's All Right. He answered that he didn't have any talent that could compete with Elvis Presley. History has proven that he was right.

My record talent was obtained through just plain hard work. I used to visit clubs, taverns and booze joints in and around Chicago; also, I used to travel all through the southern states in search of talent, and sometimes I had very good luck. As a rule, I had considerable trouble with plantation owners, as they were afraid that I would be the cause of their

help refusing to return. This did happen on several occasions.

(Ed. Note: In his colorful autobiography, Big Bill Blues, the late Bill Broonzy describes such an encounter Melrose had when he went to Yazoo City, Miss., to bring singer-guitarist Tommy McClennan north to record. Broonzy describes it in these words:

"When Mr. Melrose, who is a white man, went to get Tommy, I told him what he should do to keep out of trouble in Mississippi, but he told me that he knew and that he was a white man, too.

"It doesn't matter in Mississippi,' I told him. 'You's a Northern white man and they don't like you down there if they see you around Negroes, talking to them. Get some Negro out of town to go and talk to Tommy.'

"But no, he wouldn't do like I told him and he did get in trouble--and a lot of it too, because he had to run and leave his car and send back after it and leave money for Tommy to come to Chicago. When I saw him he laughed and said:

"Bill, you was damn right, they don't like me down there.'

"Tommy lived on a farm about fifteen miles out of Yazoo City and there ain't but one road, that means one way to go out there and one way to come back and you have to pass the boss' house both times, so they know a stranger's there and they hate it.

"They don't call me a white man down there,' Mr. Melrose told me. 'They call me a Yankee. What does that mean, Bill?'

"I told you they don't like a white man from the North out on their farm or anywhere they have five or six hundred Negroes working. I told you that you might get hurt out on one of them farms or camps.'

"Get hurt, get hurt, hell, they nearly killed me, and they would have done it if I hadn't run like hell. I'll certainly never go down there again.'

"So he used to send me all the time after artists. He never did go down South again."--Big Bill Blues, as told to Yannick Bruynoghe, Oak Publications, New York, 1964, pp. 141-142.)

In selecting the numbers to record, I had one thought in mind: the public. Some of the artists who could not read or write made it very difficult to record them. Every time they would record a number they could never repeat the



Curtis Jones



Doctor Clayton

Jazz Gillum

same verses. The result would be to record the number about four times and select the one with the best verses. I have rehearsed some of them at least six times on four selections and when we reached the studios, they would sing two or three different verses for each song. Of course, this was only a small percentage of the artists.

Now that I am seventy-five years old, I am enjoying the beautiful Florida climate. I am in excellent health. My wife and I really like Florida, and enjoy visiting our four children and eleven grandchildren located in different parts of the country.

We are saddened to report that shortly after preparing the above reminiscences for AFMO, Lester Melrose succumbed to a heart attack on Good Friday, April 12, 1968. He was 76 years old at the time of his death and had been enjoying a well-earned retirement in Florida. He is survived by his widow Blanche Melrose, four children and 12 grandchildren, to whom we extend our condolences.

WHO WAS WHO?

AN INDEX OF
HILL COUNTRY RECORDING PSEUDONYMS
By HARLAN DANIEL

PERFORMERS' REAL NAMES ARE SHOWN IN
CAPITAL LETTERS.

Personal pseudonyms -- that is, used by only
one person or group -- are shown in small
letters.

House or common pseudonyms used by more
than one person or group are underscored.

Each pseudonym is followed by the name of the
person or persons who use it. All pseudonyms
used by an artist follow his own name. An asterisk
(*) is used where the real name of an artist is
unknown or in doubt.

-A-

LORAN ABRAM: The Texas Ranger (Superior
label only), the West Virginia Ridge Runners.
Louis Acker: GOEBEL REEVES.
Clarence Adams: WELBY TOOMEY.
Joe Adams: BOB MILLER.
JIMMIE ADAMS and BUD JAMISON: The Rolling
Stones.
James Ahearn: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
George Ake: GEORGE HUNT*.
DAVID AKEMAN: Stringbean.
Alabama Four: The CHARLES BROTHERS/THE
NORTH GEORGIA QUARTETTE.
The Alleghany Highlanders: NORTH CAROLINA
RAMBLERS.
Mack Allen: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
James Alston: FRANK WELLING.
Andy Anderson: FRANKIE MARVIN.
Bob Andrews: CARSON J. ROBISON.
Arkansas Charlie: CHARLIE CRAVER.
The Arkansas Trio: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER,
ED SMALLE and JOHN CALI.
Arkansas Woodchopper: LUTHER OSSENBRINK.
Armstrong's Players: NICHOLSON'S PLAYERS.
Armstrong and Jacobs: NICHOLSON'S PLAYERS.
Arnold Brothers: KESSINGER BROTHERS.
CLARENCE ASHLEY: Tom Ashley, Tom Hutchin-
son, Oscar Brown.
Clyde Ashley: BILL COX.
Tom Ashley: CLARENCE ASHLEY.
Asparagus Joe: CLAUDE W. MOYE.
Austin Brothers: FRANK and JAMES McCRAVEY.
(ORVILLE) GENE AUTRY: Johnny Dodds, John
Hardy, Overton Hatfield, Sam Hill, Gene Johnson,
Tom Long.
GENE AUTRY and JIMMY LONG: Long Brothers,
Clayton and Green.



-B-

GREEN BAILEY: Dick Bell, Harvey Farr.
ELTON BAKER: Britt Brothers; Britt and Ford;
Elton Britt; Pappy, Zeke, Ezra and Elton;
Rustic Rhythm Trio; Wanatchee Mountaineers.
Luke Baldwin: BILL COX.
Ray Ball: FRANKIE MARVIN.
WILBUR BALL: see CLIFF CARLISLE and
WILBUR BALL.
Wolfe Ballard: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
JOHN BALTZELL: John Barton, Hiram Jones.
Banjo Joe: WILLARD R. HODGINS.
JOHNNY BARFIELD: Johnny Miller.
JOHNNY BARFIELD and HOYT "SLIM" BRYANT:
Johnny and Slim.
Bill Barnes: BOB MILLER.
H. M. BARNES and his BLUE RIDGE RAMBLERS:
Smokey Mountain Boys.
Yodeling Frankie Barnes: T. B. BARNSHOCK.
T. B. BARNSHOCK: Yodeling Frankie Barnes.
John Barton: JOHN BALTZELL.
The Baxter Family Trio: FRANK WELLING,
JOHN McGHEE and ALMA McGHEE.
Baxter and Layne: E. E. HACK'S STRING BAND.
Johnny Baxter: E. E. HACK'S STRING BAND.
JERRY BEHRENS: The Louisiana Blue Yodeler.
Dick Bell: GREEN BAILEY.
John Bennett: AL BERNARD.
AL BERNARD: John Bennett, Buddy Moore.

THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES: The Hollywood
Hillbilly Orchestra, Stone Mountain Boys.
Bud Billings: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
Joe Billings: CARSON J. ROBISON.
The Birmingham Entertainers: KESSINGER
BROTHERS.
John Bishop: JAMES ROBERTS.
LESTER PETE BIVINS: Lester the Highwayman.
Black Brothers: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW and
CARSON J. ROBISON.
Jimmie Black: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
Al and Joe Blackburn: FRANK and JAMES
McCRAVEY.
Charley Blake: BILL COX.
Harry Blake: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
RUBYE BLEVINS: Patsy Montana.
Blind Andy: REV. ANDREW JENKINS.
The Blind Soldier: DAVID MILLER.
The Blue Ridge Duo: GENE LUCAS and GEORGE
RENEAU
Blue Ridge Gospel Singers: BUELL KAZEE and
LESTER O'KEEFE.
BLUE RIDGE HIGHBALLERS: Smokey Blue High-
ballers, Stone Mountain Entertainers.
Blue Ridge Ramblers: THE PRAIRIE RAMBLERS.
Blue Sky Boys: BILL and EARL BOLICK.
Bob and Monte: BOB PALMER and MONTE HALL.
Bob's Boys: BOB MILLER'S HINKER DINKERS.
BILL and EARL BOLICK: The Blue Sky Boys.
Boone County Entertainers: MONROE COUNTY
BOTTLE TIPPLERS.
REV. EDWARD BOONE: Rev. Charles Wakefield.
REV. EDWARD BOONE and FAMILY:
Rev. Charles Wakefield and Family.
Jimmie Boone: CLIFF CARLISLE.
OLIVE BOONE: Mary Wakefield.
LEO BOSWELL: Jim Burbank.
Earl Bowers: ASA MARTIN.
HARRY BRADLEY*: Harold Lang.
ERNEST BRANCH: see ROY HARVEY and
ERNEST BRANCH.
Britt Brothers: ELTON BAKER.
Britt and Ford: ELTON BAKER.
Elton Britt: ELTON BAKER.
Brooks and Powell: RUBEN PUCKETT and
RICHARD BROOKS.
Clayton Brooks: C. A. WEST.
RICHARD BROOKS: see RUBEN PUCKETT and
RICHARD BROOKS.
Brown and Bunch: LEONARD RUTHERFORD and
JOHN FOSTER.
Oscar Brown: CLARENCE ASHLEY.
THE BRUNSWICK PLAYERS: The Supertone
Players.
HOYT "SLIM" BRYANT: Slim Lake; also see
JOHNNY BARFIELD and HOYT "SLIM"
BRYANT.
The Buckeye Boys: FRED HALSEY.
SAMATHA BUMGARDNER: Luella Gardner.
Alvin Bunch: TED CHESTNUT*.
Jack Burbank: MERRITT SMITH.

Jim Burbank: LEO BOSWELL.
James Burke: LUTHER OSSENBRINK.
Fiddlin' Jim Burke: DOC PHIL ROBERTS.
Abner Burkhardt: WALTER PETERSON.
BARNEY BURNETT: James Clark, Joey Ray,
Ben Weaver.
John Burton: HOWARD KEESE.
Roy Butler: ABE FINKELSTEIN.
Roy Butter: ABE FINKELSTEIN.

-C-

Caldwell and Bunch: ARTHUR CORNWALL and
WILLIAM CLEARY.
The Calgary Kid: ALLEN IRWIN.
Jeff Calhoun: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW/ABE
FINKELSTEIN/MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Jess Calhoun: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
JOHN CALI: see MARION TRY SLAUGHTER,
ED SMALLE and JOHN CALI.
Oran Campbell: DAVID MILLER.
Jimmy Cannon: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
WARREN CAPLINGER'S CUMBERLAND MOUN-
TAIN ENTERTAINERS: Dickson and Carroll,
Dixie Harmonizers, PATTERSON and
CAPLINGER.
BILL CARLISLE: Bill Clifford, The Carlises,
also see CLIFF and BILL CARLISLE.
CLIFF CARLISLE: Jimmie Boone, Bob Clifford.
CLIFF and BILL CARLISLE: The Clifford
Brothers.
CLIFF CARLISLE and WILBUR BALL: Otto and
Jim Fletcher.
Carolina Twins: DAVID FLETCHER and TWIN
FOSTER.
Bert Carson: LEW CHILDRE.
The Carson Boys: THE CARVER BOYS.
Cal Carson: CARSON J. ROBISON.
Cowboy Carson: EDWARD L. CRANE.
Gil Carson: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
Jennie Lou Carson: LUCILLE OVERSTAKE.
ROSA LEE CARSON: Moonshine Kate.
Floyd Carter: BOB MILLER.
Harry Carter: BYRD MOORE.
Tom Carter: GID TANNER.
Carter and Wilson: GID TANNER and RILEY
PUCKETT.
WILF CARTER: Montana Slim.
THE CARVER BOYS: The Carson Boys.
THOMPSON CATES: Tess and Cass.
(PHILLIP and ERNEST) THE CHARLES
BROTHERS: Alabama Four.
CHEZ CHASE: Zeke Macon, Jimmie Price.
TED CHESTNUT*: Alvin Bunch, Cal Turner.
W. C. CHILDERS: George Holmes, Enos Wanner.
MRS. W. C. CHILDERS: Mrs. George Holmes,
Mrs. Enos Wanner.
W. C. CHILDERS and EDGAR WILSON: Holmes
and Taylor, Wanner and White.
LEW CHILDRE: Bert Carson.
Clark and Howell: ROBINETTE and MOORE.

James Clark: BARNEY BURNETT/CARSON J. ROBISON.
 Clayton and Green: GENE AUTRY and JIMMY LONG.
 WILLIAM CLEARY: see ARTHUR CORNWALL and WILLIAM CLEARY.
 Clifford Brothers: CLIFF and BILL CARLISLE.
 Bill Clifford: BILL CARLISLE.
 Bob Clifford: CLIFF CARLISLE.
 Ed Clifford: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 The Clinch Valley Boys: TAYLOR'S KENTUCKY BOYS.
 George Cline: TOMMY DANDURAND.
 Jesse Coat: ASA MARTIN.
 Art Coffee: McGINTY'S OKLAHOMA COWBOY BAND.
 O. L. COFFEY: Oscar Fox.
 Collins Brothers: LESTER McFARLAND and GEORGE RENEAU.
 Al Collins: GEORGE RENEAU.
 Old Pop Collins: FRED HALL.
 Irving Combs: IRVING KAUFMAN.
 CHARLES "CHUCK" COOK: see TOM MURRAY and CHARLES "CHUCK" COOK.
 Tom Cook: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
 WALTER COON: Ray Elkins, Frank Stanton, Charley Vaughan.
 Conley and Logan: SMITH and WOODLIEFF.
 ARTHUR CORNWALL and WILLIAM CLEARY:
Caldwell and Bunch.
 Cousin Emmy: JOY MAE CARVER CREASY.
 Cowboy Joe: STUART HAMBLIN.
 BILL COX: Clyde Ashley, Luke Baldwin, Charley Blake.
 Cramer Brothers: LESTER McFARLAND and GEORGE RENEAU/MARION TRY SLAUGHTER
(BROADWAY 8061A only).
 Al Craver: GEORGE RENEAU.
 Cowboy Ed Crane: EDWARD L. CRANE.
 EDWARD L. CRANE: Cowboy Carson, Cowboy Ed Crane, Cowboy Rodgers, Bob Star, The Texas Cowboy.
 Harry Crane: ABE FINKELSTEIN.
 BOB CRANFORD: see A. B. THOMPSON and BOB CRANFORD.
 Al Craver: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 CHARLIE CRAVER: Arkansas Charlie, Marvin Craver.
 Marvin Craver: CHARLIE CRAVER/FRANKIE MARVIN
 Alvin Crawford: C. A. WEST.
 JOY MAE CARVER CREASEY: Cousin Emmy.
 Crocker and Cannon: LEONARD RUTHERFORD and JOHN FOSTER.
 CROCKETT FAMILY: Croskett Family, Pete Daley's Arkansas Fiddlers, Hale's Kentucky Mountaineers, Harlan Miners Fiddlers, Kentucky Kernels, Kentucky Mountaineers.
 Croskett Family: CROCKETT FAMILY.
 HUGH CROSS and SHUG FISHER: Hugh and Shug.
 FRANCIS LUTHER CROW: Bud Billings, Jimmie Black, Jeff Calhoun, Gil Carson, Tom Cook,

Francis Evans, Frank Evans, Frank Evers, Francis Luther, Frank Luther, Buddy Spencer, Bud Thompson, Frank Tuttle, Pete Wiggins, Tommy Wilson.
 FRANCIS LUTHER CROW and CARSON J. ROBISON: Black Brothers, Jimson Brothers, Jones Brothers, Lazy Larry, Frank Luther Trio, Robinson Luther, Carson Robison Trio, Smith and James, Jack Walters, Weary Willy.
 PHIL CROW: Phil Luther; also see CARSON ROBINSON TRIO and Frank Luther Trio.
 Simon Crum: FERLIN HUSKEY.
 Cumberland Ridge Runners: KARL DAVIS and HARTY TAYLOR.
 Cumberland String Band: E. E. HACK'S STRING BAND.
 James Cummings: ERNEST HARE/MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.

-D-

Charles Dale: ABE FINKELSTEIN.
 Pete Daley's Arkansas Fiddlers: CROCKETT FAMILY.
 Vernon Dalhart: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Charles Dalton: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Walter Dalton: FRANKIE MARVIN.
 TOMMY DANDURAND: George Cline, Uncle Steve Hubbard, George Thomas.
 Wallace Daniel: ERNEST HARE.
 Emmett Davenport: ASA MARTIN.
 HOMER DAVENPORT and the YOUNG BROTHERS:
The Three Howard Boys.
 Eva David: EVA DAVIS.
 EVA DAVIS: Eva David.
 GEORGE DAVIS: The Singing Miner.
 KARL DAVIS and HARTY TAYLOR: Cumberland Ridge Runners, Karl and Harty.
 Dave Dawson: A. J. GREEN.
 Roy Deal: JOHN McGHEE.
 Vernon Dell: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 DELMORE BROTHERS: ALTON and RABON DELMORE/ARTHUR SMITH and his DIXIE LINERS (Only on Montgomery Ward 7155, 7156 and 7157.)
 CHARLES DeWITT: The Vagabond Yodeler.
 Dickson and Carroll: WARREN CAPLINGER'S CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN ENTERTAINERS.
 Dixie Harmonizers: WARREN CAPLINGER'S CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN ENTERTAINERS.
 Dixie Sacred Quartette: W. J. SMITH and EVA QUARTETTE.
 HOWARD DIXON: see FRANK GERARD and HOWARD DIXON.
 Johnny Dodds: GENE AUTRY.
 Evan Douglas and Nate Smith: KIRK McGEE and BLYTHE POTEET.
 Frank Dunbar: RAYMOND RENDER.

-E-

GEORGE EDGIN: Sam Weber.

Ray Elins: WALTER COON.
 Ellington Sacred Quartette: W. J. SMITH and EVA QUARTETTE.
 Joseph Elliott: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Elmer and Jud: HOBBS BROTHERS/DOC ROBERTS TRIO.
 Francis Evans: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
 Frank Evans: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW/MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Frank Evers: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
 Ezra of the Beverly Hill Billies: EZRA PAULETTE.

-F-

Harvey Farr: GREEN BAILEY.
 John Fergus: GEORGE HUNT*/DAVID MILLER.
 Bob Ferguson: BOB MILLER.
 John Ferguson: DAVID MILLER (Silvertone)/WELBY TOOMEY (Challenge).
 Fiddler Joe: JOSEPH SAMUELS.
 Arthur Fields: ABE FINKELSTEIN.
 ABE FINKELSTEIN: Roy Butler, Roy Butter, Jeff Calhoun, Harry Crane, Charles Dale, Arthur Fields, Bob Thomas, Vel Veteran.
 SHUG FISHER: see HUGH CROSS and SHUG FISHER.
 DAVID FLETCHER and GWIN FOSTER: Carolina Twins, Saxton Brothers
Otto and Jim Fletcher: CLIFF CARLISLE and WILBUR BALL.
 David Foley: G. B. GRAYSON and HENRY WHITTER.
 GWIN FOSTER: see DAVID FLETCHER and GWIN FOSTER.
 JOHN FOSTER: see LEONARD RUTHERFORD and JOHN FOSTER.
 Oscar Fox: O. L. COFFEY.
 THE FRUIT JAR GUZZLERS (STEVENS and BOLAR): The Panhandle Boys, Stone and Butler.
 Jep Fuller: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.

-G-

PATRICK GAFFNEY: Michael Mahaffey.
 Luella Gardner: SAMANTHA BUMGARNER.
 ROBERT A. GARDNER: see LESTER McFARLAND and ROBERT A. GARDNER.
 JOE and ZEB GAUNT: Green Brothers.
 Norman Gayle: G. B. GRAYSON and HENRY WHITTER.
 Gentry Brothers: LESTER McFARLAND and GEORGE RENEAU.
 Georgia Melody Boys: DEMPSEY JONES.
 FRANK GERARD and HOWARD DIXON: The Rambling Duet.
 Gibbs and Watson: GID TANNER and RILEY PUCKETT.
 Girls of the Golden West: MILLIE and DOLLY GOOD.
 Golden Melody Boys: DEMPSEY JONES.
 DOLLY GOOD: see MILLIE and DOLLY GOOD.

MILLIE and DOLLY GOOD: The Girls of the Golden West.
 Goodman Sacred Singers: MacDONALD QUARTETTE.
 Goose Creek Gully Jumpers: NICHOLSON'S PLAYERS.
 Alex Gordon: ERNEST V. STONEMAN.
 Tommy Gordon: C. W. JOHNSON.
 J. W. GRAHAM: see A. L. STEELEY and J. W. GRAHAM.
 Arthur Grant: ERNEST HARE.
 G. B. GRAYSON and HENRY WHITTER: David Foley, Norman Gayle, Dilliard Sanders, Grayson Thomas and Will Lotty.
 Great Gap Entertainers: RED BRUSH ROWDIES/LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN REVELEERS.
 GreenBrothers: JOE and ZEB GAUNT.
 A. J. GREEN: Dave Dawson.
 CLARENCE GREEN: Joe Long.



-H-

E. E. HACK'S STRING BAND: Baxter and Layne, Johnny Baxter, Cumberland String Band.
 Hales Kentucky Mountaineers: CROCKETT FAMILY.
 FRED HALL: Old Pop Collins.
 MONTE HALL: see BOB PALMER and MONTE HALL.
 Halliday Brothers: LESTER McFARLAND and GEORGE RENEAU.
 Fred Halliday: LESTER McFARLAND.
 FRED R. HALSEY: The Buckeye Boys.
 STUART HAMBLIN: Cowboy Joe.
 JOHN HAMMOND*: Levi Stanley.
 The Happy Chappies: FRED HOWARD and NAT VINCIENT.
 John Hardy: GENE AUTRY.
 ERNEST HARE: James Cummings, Wallace Daniel, Arthur Grant, Bob Thomas.
 George Harkins: SID HARKREADER.
 Harkins and Moran: SID HARKREADER and GRADY MOORE.
 Harkins and Perry: SID HARKREADER and BLYTHE POTEET.
 SID HARKREADER: Gerorge Harkins.

SID HARKREADER and GRADY MOORE: Harkins and Moran, MacBridge and Wright.
 SID HARKREADER and BLYTHE POTEET: Harkins and Perry.
 Harlan Miners Fiddlers: The CROCKETT FAMILY.
 Harmonica Bill: WILLIAM RUSSELL.
 Harmonica Jim: WILLIAM RUSSELL.
 The Harper Family Trio: FRANK WELLING, JOHN McGHEE and ALMA McGHEE.
 Harper and Turner: FRANK WELLING and JOHN McGHEE.
 Roy Harper: ROY HARVEY.
 William Harper and Nelson Hall: FRANK WELLING and JOHN McGHEE.
 Carl Harris: DOC PHIL ROBERTS.
 David Harris: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Harry Harris: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Harris Quartette: MacDONALD QUARTETTE.
 Sim Harris: ERNEST V. STONEMAN.
 Johnny Hart: FRANKIE MARVIN.
 ROY HARVEY: Roy Harper, Rick Hurley, John Martin, James Ragan, George Runnells, Dave Walker; also see NORTH CAROLINA RAMBLERS.
 ROY HARVEY and ERNEST BRANCH: The Railroad Boys.
 Overton Hatfield: GENE AUTRY.
 Uncle Ben Hawkins: ERNEST V. STONEMAN.
 Uncle Billy Hawkins: WILLIAM B. HOUCHEMS.
 Uncle Jim Hawkins: WILLIAM B. HOUCHEMS.
 Hayes and Jenkins: JOHNSON BROTHERS.
 Lou Hayes: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Haywire Mac: HARRY MacCLINTOCK.
 Herman Brothers: HOBBS BROTHERS.
 The Highlanders: THE NORTH CAROLINA RAMBLERS.
 Hill's Virginia Mountaineers: TAYLOR'S KENTUCKY BOYS.
 Sam Hill: GENE AUTRY.
 HARRY HILLIARD: Jack Logan.
 JESS HILLIARD: Bert Shaw.
 The Hill Billies: AL HOPKINS and the BUCKLE BUSTERS.
 HOBBS BROTHERS: Herman Brothers, Elmer and Jud.
 Sookie Hobbs: CARSON J. ROBISON.
 George Hobson: GENE LUCAS and GEORGE RENEAU.
 WILLARD R. HODGINS: Willard Randolph, Banjo Joe, Mountain Dew Dare.
 George Holden: JOHN McGHEE.
 The Hollywood Hillbilly Orchestra: THE BEVERLY HILLBILLIES.
 Holmes and Taylor: W. C. CHILDERS and EDGAR WILSON.
 George Holmes: W. C. CHILDERS.
 Mr. and Mrs. George Holmes: MR. and MRS. W. C. CHILDERS.
 ADELYN HOOD: Betsy White; also see MARION TRY SLAUGHTER, CARSON J. ROBISON and ADELYN HOOD.

AL HOPKINS and THE BUCKLE BUSTERS: The Hill Billies.
 James Horton and Family: E. R. NANCE and FAMILY.
 WILLIAM B. HOUCHEMS: Uncle Jim Hawkins, Uncle Billy Hawkins.
 FRED HOWARD and NAT VINCIENT: The Happy Chappies.
 Robert Howell: HARTSELL WATSON.
 Uncle Steve Hubbard: TOMMY DANDURAND.
 Hugh and Shug: HUGH CROSS and SHUG FISHER.
 Dan Hughey: BRADLEY KINCAID.
 GEORGE HUNT*: George Ake, John Fergus.
 Rick Hurley: ROY HARVEY.
 FERLIN HUSKY: Simon Crum.
 Hutchens Brothers: FRANK WELLING and JOHN McGHEE.
 The Hutchens Family Trio: FRANK WELLING, JOHN McGHEE and ALMA McGHEE.
 John Hutchens: JOHN McGHEE.
 Tom Hutchinson: CLARENCE ASHLEY.

-I-

Henry Irving: IRVING KAUFMAN.
 ALLEN IRWIN: The Calgary Kid.

-J-

BUD JAMISON: see JIMMIE ADAMS and BUD JAMISON.
 BEN JARRELL: Jackson Young.
 THE JENKINS FAMILY: The Spain Family.
 REV. ANDREW JENKINS: Blind Andy, Gooby Jenkins; also see THE JENKINS FAMILY.
 Gooby Jenkins: REV. ANDREW JENKINS.
 OSCAR JENKINS PILOT MOUNTAINEERS: Riley's Mountaineers.
 Herb Jennings: WELBY TOOMEY.
 Jenny: CHARLOTTE MILLER.
 Jenny's Country Band: BOB MILLER'S HINKER DINKERS.
 Jewel Trio: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER, CARSON J. ROBISON and ADELYN HOOD.
 Jimson Brothers: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW and CARSON J. ROBISON.
 Whitey Johns: JOHN I. WHITE.
 JOHNSON BROTHERS: Hayes and Jenkins.
 C. W. JOHNSON: Tommy Gordon.
 Ernest Johnson: ERNEST THOMPSON.
 Gene Johnson: GENE AUTRY.
 Henry Johnson: BYRD MOORE.
 Nellie Johnson: CONNIE SIDES.
 Smiling Tubby Johnson: CHUBBY PARKER.
 Jones Brothers: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW and CARSON J. ROBISON.
 DEMPEY JONES: Georgia Melody Boys, Golden Melody Boys, Dan Martin.
 Harry Jones: CARSON J. ROBISON.
 Hiram Jones: JOHN BALTZELL.
 SAM JONES: Stove Pipe No. 1.



Billy Jordan: DOC PHIL ROBERTS.

-K-

Bob Kackley: BOB MILLER.
 Kanawha Singers: KANAWHA SINGERS/MARION TRY SLAUGHTER, CARSON J. ROBISON and ADELYN HOOD (Brunswick 189 only).
 Kansas Jaybird: CARSON J. ROBISON.
 Karl and Harty: KARL DAVIS and HARTY TAYLOR.
 IRVING KAUFMAN: Irving Combs, Henry Irving, Noel Talor, Jack Wilson.
 BUELL KAZEE and LESTER O'KEEFE: Blue Ridge Gospel Singers.
 Charles Keene: GENE LUCAS.
 HOWARD KEESE: John Burton.
 CLIFF KEISER*: Dick Moss.
 Kentucky Kernels: CROCKETT FAMILY.
 Kentucky Mountain Boys: LESTER McFARLAND and ROBERT A. GARDNER.
 Kentucky Mountaineers: CROCKETT FAMILY.
 KENTUCKY THOROBREDS: Old Smokey Twins.
 KESSINGER BROTHERS (CLARK and LUCHES): The Birmingham Entertainers, Arnold Brothers.
 BENJAMIN KINCAID: Martin King.
 BRADLEY KINCAID: Dan Hughey, Harley Stratton.
 Joe Kincaid: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Fred King: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Martin King: BENJAMIN KINCAID.
 BEECHER R. KIRBY: Oswald.
 Dan Kutter: DAVID MILLER.
 Don Kutter: DAVID MILLER.

-L-

Slim Lake: HOYT "SLIM" BRYANT.
 Harold Lang: HARRY BRADLEY*.

Lang and Miles: ASA MARTIN and JAMES ROBERTS.
 Hugh Latimer: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Lazy Larry: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW and CARSON J. ROBISON.
 Robert Leavitt: CARSON J. ROBISON.
 Lucille Lee: LUCILLE OVERSTAKE.
 Lester the Highwayman: LESTER PETE BIVINS.
 Joe Lester: JIMMY LONG.
 Mary Lester: BEVERLY LONG.
 Charles Lewis: CHARLES LEWIS STINE.
 Gus Link: McGINTY'S OKLAHOMA COWBOY BAND.
 Tobe Little: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Jack Logan: HARRY HILLARD.
 The Lone Star Ranger: JOHN I. WHITE.
 The Lonesome Cowboy: JOHN I. WHITE.
 Lonesome Cowgirl: BUELL SISNEY.
 Lonesome Pine Twins: LESTER McFARLAND and GEORGE RENEAU/RANK and JAMES McCRAVEY (only on Supertone label).
 Long Brothers: GENE AUTRY and JIMMY LONG.
 BEVERLY LONG: Mary Lester.
 FIDDLIN' SAM LONG: Fiddlin' Dave Neal.
 JIMMY LONG: Joe Lester, also see GENE AUTRY and JIMMY LONG.
 Joe Long: CLARENCE GREEN.
 Tom Long: GENE AUTRY.
 LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN REVELEERS: Great Gap Entertainers.
 Louisiana Blue Yodeler: JERRY BEHRENS.
 GENE LUCAS: Gene Austin, Charles Keene.
 GENE LUCAS and GEORGE RENEAU: The Blue Ridge Duo, GEORGE RENEAU, George Hobson.
 Luke the Drifter: HANK WILLIAMS.
 Lulu Belle and Scotty: MR. and MRS. SCOTT WISEMAN.
 TED LUNSFORD: Tom Ward, Tommy Ward.
 Francis Luther: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
 Frank Luther: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
 Frank Luther Trio: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW, CARSON J. ROBISON and PHIL CROW/FRANCIS LUTHER CROW, ZORA LAYMAN and LEONARD STOKES (Decca).
 Phil Luther: PHIL CROW.
 Robinson Luther: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW and CARSON J. ROBISON.

-M-

Mac: HARRY MacCLINTOCK.
 Mac and Bob: LESTER McFARLAND and ROBERT A. GARDNER.
 MacBridge and Wright: SID HARKREADER and GRADY MOORE.
 HARRY MacCLINTOCK: Mac, Haywire Mac, Radio Mac.
 MacDONALD QUARTETTE: Goodman Sacred Singers, Harris Quartette.
 MacMann and Roberts: KIRK McGEE and BLYTHE POTEET.

Zeke Macon: CHEZZ CHASE.
 Michael Mahaffey: PATRICK GAFFNEY.
 Marlow and Young: LEONARD RUTHERFORD and JOHN FOSTER.
 Bob Massey: Marion Try Slaughter.
 Guy Massey: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Martin Brothers: FRANK WELLING and JOHN McGHEE.
 ASA MARTIN: Earl Bowers, Jesse Coat, Emmett Davenport; also see DOC ROBERTS TRIO.
 ASA MARTIN and JAMES ROBERTS: Land and Miles.
 Dan Martin: DEMPSEY JONES.
 John Martin: ROY HARVEY.
 PHINIS MARTIN: Buddy Young.
 FRANKIE MARVIN: Andy Anderson, Ray Ball, Marvin Craver, Walter Dalton, Johnny Hart, Johnnie Moore, The Texas Ranger (Supertone), Frankie Wallace, Louis Warfield, Yodeling Jimmy Warner, Jack West, George White.
 Billy McAfee: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 JOHN and EMERY MCCLUNG: West Virginia Snake Hunters.
 FRANK and JAMES McCRAVEY: Austin Brothers, Al and Joe Blackburn, Lonesome Pine Twins (Supertone).
 DAVE McENERY: Red River Dave.
 LESTER McFARLAND: Fred Halliday, John Sackett.
 LESTER McFARLAND and ROBERT A. GARDNER: Kentucky Mountain Boys, Mac and Bob, Perry Brothers.
 LESTER McFARLAND and GEORGE RENEAU: Collins Brothers, Cramer Brothers, Gentry Brothers, Halliday Brothers, Lonesome Pine Twins, Smokey Mountain Twins.
 KIRK McKEE and BLYTHE POTEET: Evan Douglass and Nate Smith, McMann and Roberts, Rand and Foster, Rogers and Pickett.
 ALMA McGHEE: see FRANK WELLING, JOHN McGHEE and ALMA McGHEE.
 JOHN McGHEE: Roy Deal, George Holden, John Hutchens, John Moore, Jess Oakley; also see FRANK WELLING and JOHN McGHEE, and FRANK WELLING, JOHN McGHEE and ALMA McGHEE.
 (BILLY) McGINTY'S OKLAHOMA COWBOY BAND: Art Coffee, Gus Link, Grace Means, Otis Stewart.
 George McLaughlin: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 McMann and Roberts: KIRK McGEE and BLYTHE POTEET.
 Grace Means: McGINTY'S OKLAHOMA COWBOY BAND.
 Memphis Bob: BOB MILLER.
 BOB MILLER: Joe Adams, Bill Barnes, Floyd Carter, Bob Ferguson, Bob Kackley, Memphis Bob, Bill Palmer, Trebor Rellim, Uncle Bud; also see BOB MILLER'S HINKER DINKERS.
 BOB MILLER'S HINKER DINKERS: Bob's Boys, Jenny's Country Band.
 CHARLOTTE MILLER: Jenny.

Dave Miller: DAVID MILLER.
 DAVID MILLER: The Blind Soldier, Oran Campbell, John Fergus, John Ferguson, Dan Kutter, Don Kutter, Dave Miller, Dare Miller, Owen Mills, Wilkins and Moore, Frank Wilkins.
 Dare Miller: DAVID MILLER.
 Johnny Miller: JOHNNY BARFIELD.
 Owen Mills: DAVID MILLER.
 The Mitchell Framily Trio: FRANK WELLING, JOHN McGHEE and ALMA McGHEE.
 Warren Mitchell: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 MONROE COUNTY BOTTLE TIPPLERS: Boone County Entertainers.
 Patsy Montana: RUBY BLEVINS.
 Montana Slim: WILF CARTER.
 Phil Montgomery: DICK PARMAN.
 MOONSHINE DAVE*: Moonshine Harry.
 Moonshine Kate: ROSA LEE CARSON.
 Moonshine Harry: MOONSHINE DAVE*.
 Buddy Moore: AL BERNARD.
 BYRD MOORE: Harry Carter, Bert Moss, Henry Johnson.
 GRADY MOORE: see SID HARKREADER and GRADY MOORE.
 John Moore: JOHN McGHEE.
 Johnnie Moore: FRANKIE MARVIN.
 Dick Morse: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 Bert Moss: BYRD MOORE.
 Dick Moss: CLIFF KEISER.
 Mountain Dew Dare: WILLARD R. HODGINS.
 CLAUDE MOYE: Asparagus Joe, Pie Plant Pete, Jerry Wallace.
 Mr. X: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER/BILLY JONES.
 JEAN MUNICK: Linda Parker.
 TOM MURRAY and CHARLES "CHUCK" COOK: Tom and Chuck.



-N-

E.R. NANCE and FAMILY: James Horton and Family.
 Fiddlin' Dave Neal: FIDDLIN' SAM LONG.
 Frank Neal: DI COSTA WOLTZ.
 Fiddlin' Frank Nelson: DOC PHIL ROBERTS.
 Jim New: NORWOOD TEW.
 (WILL J.) NICHOLSON'S PLAYERS: Armstrong's Players, Armstrong and Jacobs, Goose Creek Gully Jumpers.
 Charlie Norris: GID TANNER AND THE SKILLET LICKERS.
 THE NORTH CAROLINA RAMBLERS: The Alleghaney Highlanders (vocals by ROY HARVEY), The Highlanders (vocals by CHARLIE POOLE), The Planesmen (vocals by CHARLIE POOLE), Tennessee Mountaineers (vocals by CHARLIE POOLE), The Smokey Blue Highballers (vocals by CHARLIE POOLE), Wilson Ramblers (vocals by ROY HARVEY).
 NORTH GEORGIA QUARETTE: Alabama Four.

-O-

OAK RIDGE SACRED SINGERS: Ozark Mountain Sacred Singers.
 Jess Oakley: JOHN McGHEE.
 LESTER O'KEEFE: see BUELL KAZEE and LESTER O'KEEFE.
 The Old Sexton: JOHN I. WHITE.
 Old Smokey Twins: KENTUCKY THOROBREDS.
 The Old Virginia Fiddlers: SPANGLER and PEARSON.
 Oriole Trio: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER, CARSON J. ROBISON and ADELYN HOOD.
 LUTHER OSSENBRINK: Arkansas Woodchopper, James Burke, West Virginia Rail Splitter.
 Oswald: BEECHER R. KIRBY.
 LUCILLE OVERSTAKE: Jenny Lou Carson, Lucille Lee.
 Ozark Mountain Sacred Singers: OAK RIDGE SACRED SINGERS.

-P-

Bill Palmer: BOB MILLER.
 BOB PALMER and MONTE HALL: Bob and Monte.
 Pappy, Zeke, Ezra and Elton: TOM MURRAY, ZEKE MANNERS, EZRA PAULETTE and ELTON BAKER.
 Panhandle Boys: FRUIT JAR GUZZLERS.
 PARAMOUNT SACRED FOUR: Star Sacred Singers.
 CHUBBY PARKER: Smiling Tubby Johnson.
 DAN PARKER: Smith and Band.
 Gil Parker: CARSON J. ROBISON.
 Linda Parker: JEAN MUNICK.
 Parman of Kentucky: DICK PARMAN.
 DICK PARMAN: Phil Montgomery, Parman of Kentucky, Dave Turner.
 PATTERSON and CAPLINGER: WARREN CAP-

LINGER'S CUMBERLAND MOUNTAIN ENTERTAINERS.

EZRA PAULETTE: Ezra of the Beverly Hillbillies, Don Paul; also see Pappy, Zeke, Ezra and Elton.
 LES PAUL: Rhubarb Red.
 Don Paul: EZRA PAULETTE.
 Jackson Pavey and His Corn Shuckers: GID TANNER and THE SKILLET LICKERS.
 FRED PENDLETON: Red River Coon Hunters.
 Perry Brothers: LESTER McFARLAND and ROBERT A. GARDNER.
 Sam Peters: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 WALTER PETERSON: Abner Burkhardt, Jess Jenkins.
 PICKARD FAMILY: Pleasant Family.
 Dad Pickard: OBED PICKARD.
 OBED PICKARD: Dad Pickard, also see THE PICKARD FAMILY.
 Pie Plant Pete: CLAUDE MOYE.
 Pine Ridge Boys: MARVIN TAYLOR and DOUG SPIVEY.
 The Planesmen: NORTH CAROLINA RAMBLERS.
 Pleasant Family: PICKARD FAMILY.
 BLYTHE POTEET: see SID HARKREADER and BLYTHE POTEET, KIRK McGEE and BLYTHE POTEET.
 PRAIRIE RAMBLERS: Blue Ridge Ramblers, Sweet Violet Boys.
 Charlie Prescott: AULTON RAY*.
 Jimmie Price: CHEZ CHASE/JOHN I. WHITE/ED "JAKE" WEST.
 Holland Puckett: HARTSELL WATSON.
 (GEORGE) RILEY PUCKETT: Will Taylor, Tom Watson, Fred Wilson; also see GID TANNER and RILEY PUCKETT.
 RUBEN PUCKETT and RICHARD BROOKS: Brooks and Powell.
 Si Puckett: HARTSELL WATSON.

-R-

Rachel: RACHEL VEACH.
 Radio Mac: HARRY MacCLINTOCK.
 James Ragan: ROY HARVEY.
 The Railroad Boys: ROY HARVEY and ERNEST BRANCH.
 Rambling Duet: FRANK GERARD and HOWARD DIXON.
 Rambling Rogue: FRED ROSE.
 Rand and Foster: KIRK McGEE and BLYTHE POTEET, FRANK WELLING and JOHN McGHEE.
 Willard Randolph: WILLARD R. HODGINS.
 AULTON RAY*: Charlie Prescott.
 Joey Ray: BARNEY BURNETT.
 Harry Raymond: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
 RED BRUSH ROWDIES: Great Gap Entertainers.
 The Red Fox Chasers: A.B. THOMPSON and BOB CRANFORD.
 The Red Headed Fiddlers: A.L. STEELEY and J.W. GRAHAM.

Red River Coon Hunters: FRED PENDLETON.
Red River Dave: DAVE McENERY.
GOEBEL REEVES: Louis Acker, George Riley,
The Texas Drifter, The Yodeling Rustler.
Regal Rascals: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER,
CARSON J. ROBISON and ADELYN HOOD.
Joe Reeves: MILLER WIKEL.
Walter Regan: FRANK WELLING.
Trebtor Rellim: BOB MILLER.
RAYMOND RENDER: Frank Dunbar.
George Reneau: GENE LUCAS and GEORGE
RENEAU.
GEORGE RENEAU: Al Collins, Al Cramer; also
see GENE LUCAS and GEORGE RENEAU,
LESTER McFARLAND and GEORGE RENEAU.
Rex Quartette: RILEY QUARTETTE.
Jack Rhan: JOHN RYAN.
Rhubarb Red: LES PAUL.
RILEY QUARTETTE: Rex Quartette.
Riley's Mountaineers: OSCAR JENKINS' PILOT
MOUNTAINEERS.
George Riley: GOEBEL REEVES.
Roberts and Rose: DOC ROBERTS TRIO.
DOC (PHIL) ROBERTS: Fiddlin' Jim Burke,
Carl Harris, Fiddlin' Frank Nelson, Billy
Jordon.
DOC (PHIL) ROBERTS TRIO: Elmer and Jud,
Roberts and Rose, DOC ROBERTS and ASA
MARTIN.
JAMES ROBERTS: John Bishop; also see ASA
MARTIN and JAMES ROBERTS.
ROBINETTE and MOORE: Clark and Howell.
Frank Robeson: CARSON J. ROBISON.
CARSON J. ROBISON: Bob Andrews, Joe Billings,
Cal Carson, James Clark, Sookie Hobbs, Harry
Jones, Kansas Jaybird, Robert Leavitt, Gil
Parker, Frank Robeson, Claude Samuels,
Traveling Jim Smith, Charlie Wells; also see
FRANCIS LUTHER CROW and CARSON J.
ROBISON, and MARION TRY SLAUGHTER,
CARSON J. ROBISON and ADELYN HOOD.
CARSON ROBISON TRIO: FRANCIS LUTHER
CROW, CARSON J. ROBISON and PHIL CROW.
Cowboy Rodgers: EDWARD L. CRANE.
Rogers and Pickett: KIRK McGEE and BLYTHE
POTEET.
Roy Rogers: LEONARD SLYE.
The Rolling Stones: JIMMIE ADAMS and BUD
JAMISON.
FRED ROSE: Rambling Rogue.
George Runnells: ROY HARVEY.
WILLIAM RUSSELL: Harmonica Bill, Harmonica
Jim.
Rustic Rhythm Trio: ELTON BAKER, TOM
MURRAY and ZEKE MANNERS.
LEONARD RUTHERFORD and JOHN FOSTER:
Crocker and Cannon, Brown and Bunch, Marlow
and Young, Taylor and Bunch.
JOHN RYAN: Jack Rhan.
P.L. RYAN: Dan Weber.

John Sackett: LESTER McFARLAND.
Claude Samuels: CARSON J. ROBISON.
JOSEPH SAMUELS: Fiddler Joe, Serene.
Sanders Brothers: SANDLIN BROTHERS.
Dilliard Sanders: G.B. GRAYSON and HENRY
WHITTER.
SANDLIN BROTHERS: Sanders Brothers.
Saxton Brothers: DAVID FLETCHER and GWIN
FOSTER.
Henry Scott: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Uncle Jum Seane: ERNEST V. STONEMAN.
Serene: JOSEPH SAMUELS.
Bert Shaw: JESS HILLIARD.
CONNIE SIDES: Nellie Johnson.
Singing Miner: GEORGE DAVIS.
BUERL SISNEY: Lonesome Cowgirl.
Skyland Scotty: SCOTT WISEMAN.
MARION TRY SLAUGHTER: James Ahearn, Mack
Allen, Wolfe Ballard, Harry Blake, Jeff Calhoun,
Jess Calhoun, Jimmy Cannon, Ed Clifford,
Cramer Brothers, Al Craver, James Cum-
mings, Vernon Dalhart, Charles Dalton, Vernon
Dell, Joseph Elliot, Frank Evans, Jep Fuller,
David Harris, Harry Harris, Lou Hayes, Joe
Kincaid, Fred King, Hugh Latimer, Tobe Little,
Bob Massey, Guy Massey, Billy McAfee, George
McLaughlin, Warren Mitchell, Dick Morse,
Mr. X, Sam Peters, Harry Raymond, Henry
Scott, Josephus Smith, Cliff Stewart, Edward
Stone, Billy Stuart, Bill Terry, Allen Turner,
Sid Turner, Bill Vernon, Billy Vernon, Herbert
Vernon, Billy Vernon, Herbert Vernon, Will
Vernon, Vel Veteran, Tom Watson, Bob White,
Robert White, Walter Whitlock, George Woods.
MARION TRY SLAUGHTER, ED SMALLE and
JOHN CALI: The Arkansas Trio, The Windy
City Trio.
MARION TRY SLAUGHTER, CARSON J. ROBISON
and ADELYN HOOD: Kanawha Singers, Jewel
Trio, Oriole Trio, Regal Rascals.
LEONARD SLYE: Roy Rogers.
ED SMALLE: see MARION TRY CLAUGHTER,
ED SMALLE and JOHN CALI.
Smith and Band: DAN PARKER.
Smith and James: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW and
CARSON J. ROBISON.
SMITH and WOODCLIFF: Conley and Logan.
ARTHUR SMITH and HIS DIXIE LINERS: Delmore
Brothers (only on Montgomery Ward 7155,
7156, and 7157).
Josephus Smith: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
MERRITT SMITH: Jack Burbank.
Travelin' Jim Smith: CARSON J. ROBISON.
W.J. SMITH and THE EVA QUARETTE: Dixie
Sacred Quartette, Ellington Sacred Quartette.
Smokey Blue Bighallers: BLUE RIDGE HIGH-
BALLERS/NORTH CAROLINA RAMBLERS.
Smokey Mountain Boys: H.M. BARNES and HIS
BLUE RIDGE RAMBLERS.

Smokey Mountain Twins: LESTER McFARLAND
and GEORGE RENEAU.
The Spain Family: THE JENKINS FAMILY.
SPANGLER and PEARSON: The Old Virginia
Fiddlers.
Buddy Spencer: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
DOUG SPIVEY: see MARVIN TAYLOR and DOUG
SPIVEY.
Levi Stanley: JOHN HAMMOND*.
Frank Stanton: WALTER COON.
Bob Star: EDWARD L. CRANE.
Star Sacred Singers: PARAMOUNT SACRED FOUR
X.C. SACRED QUARTETTE.
A.L. STEELEY and J.W. GRAHAM: The Red
Headed Fiddlers.
STEVENS and BOLAR: see THE FRUIT JAR
GUZZLERS.
Cliff Stewart: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Otis Stewart: MCGINTY'S OKLAHOMA COWBOY
BAND.
CHARLES LEWIS STINE: Charles Lewis.
Stone and Butler: THE FRUIT JAR GUZZLERS.
Stone Mountain Boys: THE BEVERLY HILL-
BILLIES.
Stone Mountain Entertainers: BLUE RIDGE
HIGHBALLERS.
CLIFFIE STONE: Cliffie Stonehead.
Edward Stone: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Cliffie Stonehead: CLIFFIE STONE.
ERNEST V. STONEMAN: Alex Gordon, Sim Harris,
Uncle Ben Hawkins, Uncle Jim Seane.
Stove Pipe No. 1: SAM JONES.
Harley Stratton: BRADLEY KINCAID.
Stringbean: DAVID AKEMAN.
Billy Stuart: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Joe Summers: FRANK WELLINGS.
The Supertone Players: THE BRUNSWICK
PLAYERS.
Sweet Violet Boys: PRAIRIE RAMBLERS.

-T-

GID TANNER: Tom Carter, Tom Watson.
GID TANNER and RILEY PUCKETT: Carter
and Wilson, Gibbs and Watson.
GID TANNER and THE SKILLET LICKERS:
Charlie Norris, Jackson Pavey and His Corn
Shuckers.
Taylor and Bunch: LEONARD RUTHERFORD
and JOHN FOSTER.
HARTY TAYLOR: see KARL DAVIS and HARTY
TAYLOR.
MARVIN TAYLOR and DOUG SPIVEY: Pine Ridge
Boys.
Noel Taylor: IRVING KAUFMAN.
Will Taylor: RILEY PUCKETT.
TAYLOR'S KENTUCKY BOYS: Clinch Valley Boys,
Hill's Virginia Mountaineers.
Tennessee Mountaineers: NORTH CAROLINA
RAMBLERS.
Bill Terry: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.

Tess and Cass: THOMPSON CATES.
NORWOOD TEW: Jim New.
The Texas Cowboy: EDWARD L. CRANE.
The Texas Drifter: GOEBEL REEVES.
The Texas Ranger: LORAN ABRAM (Superior),
FRANKIE MARVIN (Supertone).
Thomas and Jordan: A.B. THOMPSON and BOB
CRANFIELD.
Bob Thomas: ABE FINKELSTEIN/ERNEST
HARE.
George Thomas: TOMMY DANDURAND.
Grayson Thomas and Will Lott: G.B. GRAYSON
and HENRY WHITTER.
A.B. THOMPSON and BOB CRANFORD: The Red
Fox Chasers, Thomas and Jordan, Cal Turner
and Bud Parkins, West Virginia Possum
Tamers.
Bud Thompson: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.



ERNEST THOMPSON: Ernest Johnson, Jed Tomp-
kins.
The Three Howard Boys: HOMER DAVENPORT
and THE YOUNG BROTHERS.
Tom and Chuck: TOM MURRAY and CHARLES
"CHUCK" COOK.
Jed Tompkins: ERNEST THOMPSON.
WELBY TOOMEY: Clarence Adams, John Fergu-
son (Challenge), Herb Jennings.
Allen Turner: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Cal Turner: TED CHESTNUT*.
Cal Turner and Bud Parkins: A.B. THOMPSON
and BOB CRANFORD.
Dave Turner: DICK PARMAN.
Sid Turner: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Frank Tuttle: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.

-U-

Uncle Bud: BOB MILLER.

-V-

The Vagabond Yodeler: CHARLES DeWITT.
NAT VINCIEN: see FRED HOWARD and NAT VINCIEN.
Charley Vaughan: WALTER COON.
RACHEL VEACH: Rachel.
Bill Vernon: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Billy Vernon: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Herbert Vernon: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Will Vernon: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Vel Veteran: ABE FINKELSTEIN/MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.

-W-

Rev. Charles Wakefield: REV. EDWARD BOONE.
Rev. Charles Wakefield and Family: REV. EDWARD BOONE and FAMILY.
Mary Wakefield: OLIVE BOONE.
Dave Walker: ROY HARVEY.
Frankie Wallace: FRANKIE MARVIN.
Jerry Wallace: CLAUDE MOYE.
Jack Walters: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW and CARSON J. ROBISON.
Wanatchee Mountaineers: ELTON BAKER, TOM MURRAY and ZEKE MANERS.
Wanner and White: W.C. CHILDERS and EDGAR WILSON.
Enos Wanner: W.C. CHILDERS.
Mr. and Mrs. Enos Wanner: MR. and MRS. W.C. CHILDERS.
Tom Ward: TED LUNS福德.
Tommy Ward: TED LUNS福德.
Louis Warfield: FRANKIE MARVIN.
Yodeling Jimmy Warner: FRANKIE MARVIN.
HARTSELL WATSON: Robert Howell, Holland Puckett, Si Puckett, Harvey Watson.
Harvey Watson: HARTSELL WATSON.
Tom Watson: RILEY PUCKETT/MARION TRY SLAUGHTER/GID TANNER.
(WILMER) WATTS and WILSON: Weaver and Wiggins.
Weary Willy: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW and CARSON J. ROBISON.
Weaver and Wiggins: WATTS and WILSON.
Ben Weaver: BARNEY BURNETT.
Dan Weber: P.L. RYAN.
Sam Weber: GEORGE EDGIN.
FRANK WELLING: James Alston, Walter Regan, Joe Summers, Frank Wilkins.
FRANK WELLING and JOHN McGHEE: William Harper and Nelson Hall, Harper and Turner, Hutchens Brothers, Martin Brothers, Rand and Foster, Wilkins and Moore, Wilkins and Sharon.
FRANK WELLING, JOHN McGHEE and ALMA McGHEE: The Baxter Family Trio, The Harper Family Trio, The Hutchens Family Trio, The Mitchell Family Trio.
(FRANK) WELLING and SCHANNEN: Wilkins and Sharon.

Charlie Wells: CARSON J. ROBISON.
C.A. WEST: Clayton Brooks, Alvin Crawford.
ED "JAKE" WEST: Jimmie Price.
Jack West: FRANKIE MARVIN.
West Virginia Possum Tamers: A.B. THOMPSON and BOB CRANFORD.
West Virginia Rail Splitter: LUTHER OSSENBRINK.
The West Virginia Ridge Runners: LORAN ABRAM.
West Virginia Snake Hunters: JOHN and EMERY McCLUNG.
Al Westerly: JACK WESTON*.
JACK WESTON*: Al Westerly.
Jim Whalen: MILLER WIKEL.
Betsy White: ADELYN HOOD.
Bob White: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
George White: FRANKIE MARVIN.
JOHN I. WHITE: Whitey Johns, The Lonesome Cowboy, The Lone Star Ranger, Jimmie Price, The Old Sexton.
Robert White: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
Walter Whitlock: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.
HENRY WHITTER: Henry Whittier; also see G.B. GRAYSON and HENRY WHITTER.
Henry Whittier: HENRY WHITTER.
Pete Wiggins: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
MILLER WIKEL: Joe Reeves, Jim Whalen.
Wilkins and Moore: DAVID MILLER/FRANK WELLING and JOHN McGHEE.
Wilkins and Sharon: FRANK WELLING and JOHN McGHEE/(FRANK) WELLING and SCHANNEN.
Frank Wilkins: DAVID MILLER/FRANK WELLING.
HANK WILLIAMS: Luke the Drifter.
EDGAR WILSON: see W.C. CHILDERS and EDGAR WILSON.
Fred Wilson: RILEY PUCKETT.
Jack Wilson: IRVING KAUFMAN.
Tommy Wilson: FRANCIS LUTHER CROW.
Wilson Ramblers: NORTH CAROLINA RAMBLERS.
Windy City Trio: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER, ED SMALLE and JOHN CALI.
SCOTT WISEMAN: Skyland Scotty.
MR. and MRS. SCOTT WISEMAN: Lulu Belle and Scotty.
DA COSTA WOLTZ: Frank Neal.
George Woods: MARION TRY SLAUGHTER.

-X-

X.C. SACRED QUARTETTE: Star Sacred Singers.

-Y-

Yodeling Rustler: GOEBEL REEVES.
YOUNG BROTHERS: see HOMER DAVENPORT and THE YOUNG BROTHERS.
Buddy Young: PHINIS MARTIN.
Jackson Young: BEN JARRELL.

TEXAS POLKA MUSIC

INTERVIEW WITH JOE PATEK
by Chris Strachwitz

Polka music is one of the oldest and perhaps least changing forms of American folk music. It is still very popular in many parts of the country, especially around Philadelphia, Chicago, Ohio, Milwaukee, eastern Nebraska and in Texas, just to mention a few areas. I hope that in future issues of American Folk Music Occasional we can deal further with the development of this music in other regions, but in this issue I would like to introduce Joe Patek, of Shiner, Texas, leader of one of the most interesting polka bands in southern Texas.

Texas not only has Czech and German polka music but it is also the center of Mexican "Norteno" music which, although imported from northern Mexico, as its name implies, has developed a very definite Texas sound and style. Further, Texas is the home of Adolph Hofner and other Western Swing exponents who are of German-Bohemian background and who introduced the polka element into Western music during the 1930s and '40s, giving birth to yet another hybrid form, one which is still quite popular, particularly in the San Antonio area, where I heard it on the radio.

Apparently polka music has never caught the fancy of folklorists, perhaps because it is a dance music and, unlike jazz, there is relatively little improvising evident in the performances of most polka bands.

However, I find the music of Joe Patek particularly interesting because his is one of the few bands I have heard that incorporates the many regional musical forms heard in that part of Texas, although its main emphasis is, of course, on the old polkas and waltzes. This music is still very much alive and faces problems common to most forms of American folk music in this age of mechanization and urbanization.

--C.S.

J.P.--My father came from Czechoslovakia--Bohemia--when he was 20 years old, about 1895. He came here as a single man; he got married here about two years after he came over, came straight to Texas. He had played in a band in Czechoslovakia...he had a band there. Over here when he got married he had six sons and all six sons were playing in the band.

Q.--Did he teach you the music?

J.P.--Well, some of them had lessons, but I myself didn't have lessons. I just picked it up myself. I play saxophone and clarinet.

Q.--Where did most of your music come from?

J.P.--One time you could get sheet music...well, you still can get polka music in Chicago...that's where he used to order his polkas, but now these polkas come from anywhere. You just got to make them yourself; you can't get them.

Q.--Your band seems to blend some of the other musical elements you hear around here, like Mexican music and rock-and-roll. I have your record, Corrido Rock; who made that up?

J.P.--It was a boy by the name of Vernon Drusk. He used to be from Schulenberg but he lives in Houston now, plays with a band there. He used to play with us.

Q. When did you first make records?

J.P.--We first recorded many years ago for the Decca company. Then we made many more, 15 to 20 years ago, on the Hummingbird and FBC labels. We met the Decca people in San Antonio...just recorded a few songs. At that time polka music wasn't going as strong as it is now. Jazz music was popular then; it wasn't this rock-and-roll and Beatle music--that kills the world.
Q.--You get a pretty good audience here, don't you?

J.P.--Oh, yes, we book for weekends a year ahead.

Q.--Has this music recently come back? Is it more popular now?

J.P.--No, not pokka music. Now it's a little weaker than it was 10 or 15 years ago...because of this rock-and-roll; the teenagers have kind of taken over. You used to play a polka dance and you could have a good audience of young and old, but now when you play a polka dance you mostly have married couples--no young generation, no teenagers. They all kind of go into that rock-and-roll, but it's been predicted it won't last.

Q.--What sort of work do you do besides playing music?

J.P.--I own several business places in Shiner. I've got a grocery store, cafe, two other meat markets where we make all our own sausages, and we got locker service--we got a bunch of locker boxes we rent--and our own slaughter house where we kill all our fresh stuff daily. I've got 24 employees. I don't go out nowhere--they come to me--and we can't make enough 'cause it's a good product and I got five good sons with me too! Four of them are in business with me and one of them became

a druggist and we built him a drugstore down there too. We are part owners of the drugstore too. One plays with me; the rest are busy working. Q.--Does playing this music give you a sense of relaxation?

J.P.--We don't do it for money...trying to make a living out of it. We do it as a hobby, 'cause we love music. I don't go fishing, don't go hunting... I don't own a gun or a fishing pole, but I'll go 150 or 200 miles to play a dance.

Q.--Where do you find most of your audiences for this type of music, just around Shiner or where?

J.P.--Houston is very good and San Antonio is very good, Taylor, all down around Temple...down that line. It's all good polka music.

Q.--Are most of the people of Czech background or are there also Germans?

J.P.--Lot of Germans, too. We play in German settlements. We are all Czech. We sing in Czech, and when we come to German settlements they don't know what we're singing but they sure enjoy the dancing.

Q.--Do you think the Czech you speak is pretty much the way they speak it in Czechoslovakia?

J.P.--I wouldn't know. My daddy spoke about like I do. When I went to school I went to the third grade in Czech; they were teaching Czech at that time. We learned to read and write it, but today they don't, and it's all going away just like the German language. The children don't talk it no more. My own children...when they started school they didn't know how to talk English...but right now they have a hard job to talk Czech, because everything is in English.

I didn't graduate from school 'cause I had to go behind the plow. I was farming up until 22 years of age (I was the baby of the family); my father then retired. Gave us each a farm...had five farms there. One brother was dead already...he died when he was single...so he gave us five sons each a farm. I was single at the time when he retired. He moved to town and that's why I'm in town having business. He built me a filling station and told me, "I don't want you to be a bum here; I want you to work and I want to see what you're going to make." And I really made good.

Q.--What other kinds of music do you like?

J.P.--Well, I like jazz, I like jazz, but not rock-and-roll.

Q.--Did you ever hear people like Bob Wills?

J.P.--Western? Well, anything is better than rock-and-roll! Because if you stand too close to the band they either run you crazy or run you home! I don't believe it's playing...it's just hollering and bouncing and hitting something, and that's all.

Q.--Who books your band?

J.P.--I do! So far, I got to say...not to be bragging...but I didn't ask for one dance to play; they all called me!

Q.--Do you think many of the young people in Shiner stay in town or do they go off to the bigger cities?

J.P.--When they get married the biggest part of them move to a big city. But Shiner, although it's a small town it's a clean town, and we never quit building houses. We got new additions, and we don't have a house to rent--so I don't know where them people come from.

But, as you see, when a couple gets married they can't start farming no more 'cause we got little farms, from 50 to 100 acres, and they can't afford to buy farm implements for about \$10-15,000 and make anything. The government doesn't let them plant but 15-20 acres of cotton, so they have to go to the cities. Some of the older people are getting too old to farm and some young couples will run maybe 2 or 3 farms; the old people can live there but the young are working their land. Lot of cattle in our area. The crops they grow here are cotton, corn, maize, feed. You can always make a living when you own your own place. Q.--Do you think the Czech people all came to Shiner about the same time?

J.P.--Well, that's before my time. There are quite a few German people here but, I tell you, the German and the Czech people intermarry...they are all good workers, German or Bohemian, all hard workers. We never had too many "Americans." The whole territory--like Fayetteville, Flatonia, Moulton--is Bohemian.

My father bought the land from the old-timers. They had some land, got it cheap in those days. Some men owned thousands of acres and would get it for a clock or something. So they would sell it. They got the land for maybe \$2 an acre, but today it's bringing \$200 and \$300 an acre. It's a nice country to live in and nobody is hungry, I'll tell you that. And who is hungry, he'll be hungry even in the city 'cause he don't try to help himself. We are friendly people...we think lots of each other, neighbors. In the city, if you're a greedy fellow they get mad at you. I heard that in California when you talk to somebody you don't know, you likely to be in jail the next day. Here, you know, a salesman came by the other day who wanted to sell me an ice machine; he was from San Antonio. We need the ice machine; we could sell the ice too, but we got such a good ice man here and I think the world of him and I hate to hurt his trade. And the salesman said, "My goodness, I didn't know your little town lives the right way."

Q.--Do you play mostly by sheet music or by memory?

J.P.--We play lots by music and then we play lots without music--because we have to. There are many pieces brought here from Czechoslovakia that were played there maybe 100 or 150 years ago; they were brought here and you can't get them in print anywhere. The oldtimers knew the words, knew how to sing them; they'd give us a tune and we would just pick it up and make a piece out of it. You can't go to any publisher and ask for that music.

It's dance music, but at picnics we used to play a lot of march music...that's not a dance music. We used to play overtures but now we don't. We used to have 20- to 30-piece bands. But today when they have a celebration feast, they don't care for that. First, they don't want to pay for them, and they don't hardly want to feed them for free--but they want about six or seven men to play outside and sing. They don't care about concert music; they want people to come around the beer joints and celebrate.

We played a big picnic Easter Sunday at Moulton...that was very big. Herman Son's will have one next Sunday, but I wish you could see one of our Catholic picnics. We are all Catholic. If you can come on the Sunday before Labor Day to Shiner you would see a real old-time Czech picnic, and you could eat until you bust for \$1. This goes on every year. They donate cotton; they donate this and that; they have a big oxen sale. My son is always auctioneer!

Q.--Are there more orchestras in Shiner?

J.P.--I would say yes. Rudy Kurz has one. The rest are from Moulton...they have about three there. We have been playing together about 45 years, we Patek brothers...and playing like real brothers. We never split; we are the only band where the brothers never split. In other towns brothers would play together but would break up and each brother form his own band. You'll find that in Fayetteville, in Hallettsville, and in Moulton too.

I hope polka music will stay around; it's the only music that's got something to it. The rest is all like that they are dancing to now, this rock-and-roll. I think colored people danced that 30 years ago. I remember when we used to have June Teenth parades in Shiner. June Teenth (June 19th actually--C.S.), that is their day...colored people. They would celebrate then; they don't celebrate now. They are like we are now, you see. But at that time they had their own picnic and parade through town and that night they had their dance. We went down and listened in the car, you know.

Well, that is the kind of music they were using...30 or 35 years ago. They had trombone and saxophone...they had everything and they were dancing that rock-and-roll. They didn't play exactly like this rock-and-roll, because rock-and-roll isn't music.

We've got a lot of colored people there still, but they don't have those celebrations any more. They stopped that when they started mixing with us. They don't think they should have it. Sometimes you can even see one coming to our own picnics.

I don't know if they like this polka music. As far as dance halls go, I've never seen one colored person come to our dances yet. It was more like jazz in those days, but they were jumping around like now...the more bending and wiggling you do, the better.

My father played baritone horn, and he was 80 years old when he quit music. He had a stroke

Photo by Chris Strachwitz



Joe Patek's Shiner, Texas, orchestra: (l. to r.) Jerome Patek, trombone; Leonard Darilek, trumpet; Joe Patek, Jr., saxophones; Charles Patek, tuba; Charley Viet, drums.

and got a little feeble and we couldn't take him with us any more; everytime we left for a job he cried 'cause he loved playing so much. He played in the Shiner Band and others, and my older brothers learned the songs...they played trumpet and saxophone.

Q.--Could you give us the names of the members of your band?

J.P.--My brother Charlie plays bass horn; my brother Jerome, or Jerry, trombone; I play saxophone and clarinet; my son Joe Jr., saxophone; Leonard Darilek, trumpet; Charles Veit, drums; and Robert Werner, electric guitar.

Q.--When did you introduce electric guitar into your band?

J.P.--We used to have piano, but we found the pianos in dance halls were so badly out of tune that we could hardly tune our horns; so we left piano out and got guitar. Also, we used to have two trumpets until about 2 years ago, when my brother died.

Q.--Is there any difference between the kind of polka music you play and the kind they play around Chicago?

J.P.--Well, the only polka band I heard of there is the Six Fat Dutchmen. They play a little different than we do; they cut their notes a little different, and they play waltz sets and polka sets. We don't; we mix them up!

L. P. DISCOGRAPHY OF JOE PATEK

TNT LP 3002: Village Polka; El Rancho Grande; America Polka; Huntsman Waltz; Shiner Waltz; Corrido Rock.

TNT LP 3006: Jumping Jimmy; Trail in the Forest; Around the Moon; My Wild Irish Rose; Moonlight and Roses; Roses are Red; Red and White Waltz; Mexico; Wooden Heart; Little Tavern Waltz; Goodtime Polka.

Book Reviews

CONVERSATION WITH THE BLUES, By Paul Oliver Horizon Press, N.Y., 1965, 217 pp., hard-cover, \$6.75.

The fatal flaw of almost all of the jazz books to appear in the past few years has been their fundamental lifelessness.

Here is a music that swarms with vivid characters, that packs emotion into every bar and has a history as fascinating as any in the whole world of music, and yet in the hands of some of the pseudo-musicologists and musicologists it becomes dull, bare, pedestrian and altogether unlike the real thing.

One has only to compare the history-book approach to jazz to the Hentoff-Shapiro classic, Hear Me Talkin' To Ya, which remains the most interesting of all jazz books, approached only by Smith and Ramsey's Jazzmen, to see the difference vividly. Hear Me Talkin' To Ya is the story of jazz told in the words of the participants in that story. When the musicians stop talking in the other books and the historians take over, the most you get are facts. All the flesh and blood is gone.

A recent and welcome exception to this is Paul Oliver's Conversation With the Blues.

Oliver, a British jazz writer and student of the blues, came to this country several years ago and made a pilgrimage to the centers of blues singing and playing in the South and in the big mid-western cities. He recorded their stories both for this book and the BBC and the result is a priceless documentary, a remarkable bit of history which is fascinating and essential reading and a worthy companion to his previous book, Blues Fell This Morning.

The book begins with an essay by Oliver on the blues and the society from which it sprang and then, singer by singer and player by player, he lets them tell their own story, ending up with a section on recordings and a roster of straight biographical paragraphs on the participants.

"...Blues, why don't you let poor me alone. You been follerin' me ever since the day I were born!" sings Mance Lipscomb in a blues verse that

Reprinted, courtesy San Francisco Examiner & Chronicle and Ralph J. Gleason.

precedes the introduction. The rest of the text has that same poetic quality to it, the imagery that marks the classic blues verses with its timeless feeling.

In a conversation between Wade Walton and Robert Curtis Smith, recorded in a Clarksdale, Miss., barbershop on a Sunday afternoon, they get to the meat of the blues.

"The blues--when you want to sing them, you cain't sing them; and when you don't want to sing them, why you GOT to sing them--or hum them or do something. And at the times you want to sing and you don't feel bad, why you still want to sing...and you get to feel that everything goes so wrong that the blues is come in your mind...and you sing songs that I don't know if they've ever been thought of before."

A little later, Robert Curtis Smith added, "I love the boues because the blues is the only thing that gives me relief when I get to the place where it seems like everything goes wrong...I can't explain it; it's a feeling that's deep down inside, it's so deep that I can't possibly get to the bottom of it. The blues is just...the blues. That's all I know."

Oliver has recorded the sagas of Delta blues people, men who made a living playing the blues; men, like Mance Lipscomb, who spent most of their lives as farmers or field hands or itinerant workers and sang or played only occasionally. He has the stories of the Chatman family, a musical unit known as the Mississippi Sheiks, who entertained all over the South. He has interviewed some of the contemporary singers such as John Lee Hooker ("It's not only what happened to you, it's what happened to your foreparents and other people. That's what makes the blues.').

He includes the stories of prisoners, of railroad workers, of descendants of slaves. It's all there.

Railroads and highways and jails play a great part in the blues rhetoric. Parchman Farm, for instance, is a prison farm in Mississippi. The Kingston Trio recently recorded Mose Allison's classic blues, Parchman Farm, but the record company (Decca) obviously didn't know much about blues history. They released it as Parchment Farm! Oliver interviewed a prisoner at Parchman Farm and quotes the sign outside, "A Great Institution in a Great State." The interview doesn't tell it quite like that.

Included in the people interviewed are Muddy Waters, Otis Spann, Rufus Perryman (Speckled Red), Sam Price, Black Ace (B.K. Turner), Gus

Cannon (composer of Walk Right In), Jesse Crump, Lightning Hopkins, Edith Johnson, Lonnie Johnson, Mary Johnson, Little Brother Montgomery, Roosevelt Sykes, Victoria Spivey, and numerous others.

The dedication of people like Paul Oliver is

MOJO HAND, By Jane Phillips. Trident Press, N.Y., 1966, 180 pp., hard-cover, \$4.95.

This novel, which describes the encounter between Eunice Prideaux, a "high yellor" debutante from San Francisco, and Blacksnake Brown, an aging Raleigh, N. Carolina, bluesman, was written by a young Los Angeles writer-musician who has observed the blues milieu at first hand in Houston and elsewhere.

The book opens as Eunice makes her way through the slums of Raleigh, having traveled there from San Francisco in search of the legendary blues singer Brown. She seeks him out at his home but, finding herself unable to communicate with him, flees. The bluesman traces her to her hotel and invites her to attend a dance at which he is to play the following evening. Accepting, she reflects that "...she had been looking for this night and knew that...she would never return to her former mode of existence. She knew that now it was for her to jive, cry, and fall in the night, yet she did not know how for she had not been born to it. Never had she been forced to her knees to beg for the continuation of her existence, nor fight both God and the Devil ripping at her soul, never had she been forced to fight to move in the intricate web of scuffle, never had she been forced to fight a woman for the right to a man, nor fought out love with a man. She had never fought for existence, now she would have to."

She becomes Blacksnake's woman, finds work at a neighborhood gin-mill and she, Blacksnake and his friends fill the empty hours with fishing, drinking, gambling and music making. Eunice's job at the Raleigh Palace daily becomes more oppressive and the vacuity of her life with Brown leaves her little emotional standing-ground. "Not that she would ever forget, but...the sense of her love was being twisted down and forgotten in the drudgery of the days... she knew it must be ended."

Brown, the archtypical bluesman, is of course capable of making a woman's life a heaven. The affair is ended by his complementary talent for making her life a hell. His mistrust of, and indifference to Eunice are transformed into suspicion and violence; even the fact that she carries his child does not allay his suspicion that she is no longer his woman.

One day, in the midst of gin and accusations, Eunice puts a rattlesnake mojo hex on Blacksnake and the next morning she flees to Lake Charles, Louisiana. After a few days, however, she follows Blacksnake to South Bay, whence he has gone to see his other woman, Miss Sally Mae, who lives there through the winter and spring, seeing Blacksnake only when he comes to her for money.

As the child grows in her belly, so the rattlesnake charm Eunice has left in Raleigh decays. On the day the snake's head separates from its body

producing some truly valuable things. The German TV show done last fall and featuring many blues singers is another example of the kind of research among these fast-disappearing artists that is apparently only being done by Europeans. Americans just do not seem to want to see (or hear) what's right before their eyes.

Miss Sally Mae discovers Blacksnake talking to Eunice and, enraged, strikes him on the head with a club. In a few hours Blacksnake Brown lies dead and Eunice is on her way back to his mother in Raleigh, there to bear his child.

It should be emphasized here that Miss Phillips shows considerable promise as a writer. She obviously is thoroughly familiar with the nuances of speech and the behavior patterns of the denizens of the blues milieu and she is able to communicate these nuances to the reader. Her portrait of Blacksnake, the descriptions of the heroine's prison episode and of life at South Bay are excellent vignettes. Unfortunately, a series of vignettes, however successful, do not constitute a successful novel.

The book's major flaw is the absence of a believable heroine. Without some idea of Eunice's motives, the plot cannot march forward; Miss Phillips gives us little, if any, insight into what motivates Eunice to do the things she is depicted as doing. Why, for example, does she leave her home in San Francisco to find and live with Brown in Raleigh? Why does she stay with him and hex him when he mistreats her? Why does she follow him to South Bay and, when he is dead, return to his mother to bear his child?

The obvious answer, of course, is that Eunice experiences alienation as a middle-class Negro in San Francisco, and this drives her to attempt

to discover her nature in the "Negro experience" as embodied in Blacksake. This, however, is a social-psychological explanation--not a dramatic explanation--but the novel fails to provide a dramatic explanation that satisfies me. There is some description of Eunice's life before Raleigh; how she has had difficulty accepting the fact of her negritude, her first sexual experience, and her discovery that the apparently staid mothers of her fellow debutantes were capable of elemental reactions to the feral music of Blacksake Brown. These, however, fail to convince me that her actions in the novel are reasonable results. Many middle-class Negro children grow up without accepting the fact that they are black, find their first sexual encounters less than pleasant, and discover the insulated society in which they have grown up to be somewhat of a sham. Few of them, however, run off to Raleigh (or elsewhere) to become the mistresses of blues musicians. I want to know what it is that makes Eunice Prideaux different from all these others--I want to know why she acts as she does--and I am disappointed in *Mojo Hand* because, having read it twice, I still don't know. This lack of any real motivation precludes any real understanding of either why she stayed or why Blacksake would be interested in having her stay longer than one night.

In the book, when Eunice reacts to Blacksake's accusations by asking "What the shit is wrong with you?" he responds by siezing her and insisting, "It ain't what wrong with me, baby...it what wrong with you. What make you come here in the first place with your lying ass? I been thinking 'bout it for a long long old time. I done talked it over with X.L. and we can't figure you out."

I, sadly, must stand with Blacksake. --Jon M. Hall



THE NEW LOST CITY RAMBLERS SONG BOOK, edited by John Cohen and Mike Seeger; musical transcriptions by Hally Wood Stevenson. Oak Publications, N.Y., 1964, 256 pp. paperback, \$4.50.

About 15 years ago folk music suddenly became popular again, largely due to the Almanac Singers and their successors, the Weavers. Perhaps their success was due to a respect for folk music and a belief that the words and music had intrinsic worth. However, words and music are only two-thirds of the song, and it remained for the New Lost City Ramblers almost single-handedly to restore the missing ingredient--style.

The Ramblers--Mike Seeger, John Cohen, formerly Tom Paley, and now Tracy Schwarz--by their field work, films, research, records and concerts, have recreated for us an important part of American folk music. There are few people who have a more intimate and extensive knowledge of old-time hillbilly music than the Ramblers and, consequently, any creation of theirs deserves our careful attention. This songbook is not a disappointment.

However, it is a difficult book to review. To treat it simply as a collection of songs suitably arranged for singing (or playing) is to overlook the most important and exciting aspects of the work. On the other hand, to regard it as the first illustrated

introduction to hillbilly music styles, aimed at folklorist and musician, is perhaps to open it to unwarranted criticism, since its authors did not write it with that goal uppermost in their minds. We will regard it as both.

Of the 125 songs included, all but a dozen or so are modelled after commercial hillbilly recordings of the period 1924-1949, and only a few are post-war. The remainder are taken from Library of Congress recordings or more recent recordings by such artists as Elizabeth Cotten, Woody Guthrie, Roscoe Holcomb, and Clarence Ashley. In most cases, the Ramblers have been scrupulous about indicating their sources, and even the sources of individual verses in cases where they use composite versions. The material is divided into 12 categories, of which the largest are *Old Love Songs*, *Wild Men & Murder*, *Take Warning*, *News and Occupational Hazards*, *Whoop 'Em Up*, and *Songs*, in order of decreasing size.

Since this can be regarded as the first extensive printed collection of songs taken from old-time hillbilly recordings, it is interesting to compare it with the standard printed folksong collections. Three convenient though arbitrary measures are the number of Child ballads¹, the number of ballads from British broadsides², and the number of native American ballads.³ For comparison we choose the largest collections from the south--Randolph's *Ozark Folk Songs*⁴ and the Brown collection from North Carolina.⁵ And perhaps for contrast, we might also consider the smaller Texas collection by Owens.⁶ As a test of the representativeness of the *Ramblers' Songbook*, we also list figures based on a much larger sampling of hillbilly records of 1922-1932.⁷ The figures indicate the percentage of the total collection which can be classified under the appropriate heading:

Collection

Collection	Child Ballads	Broadsides	Native American
Randolph (1635 texts)	9	9	9
Brown (2200 texts)	9	6	9
Owens (118 texts)	15	9	13
Ramblers (111 texts)	2	9	8
Hillbilly records (4060 texts)	0.35	0.35	4

We see, then, that the *Ramblers' Songbook* is not quite typical of hillbilly recordings. But in any case, these rough figures indicate one reason why some scholars, under the aegis of D.K. Wilgus, have crusaded for recognition of the importance of hillbilly sources in the study of American folk music.

So much for numerology, and the significance of this book as a folksong collection. As for the choice of the songs themselves, we can only say that the same taste is shown here as is exercised in the selections of any of the *Ramblers' records*--and in our opinion that means the best of old-time hillbilly music. By and large, the songs are all good to hear and--what is more to the point--good to sing and play.

- 1 See Child, Francis J., *The English and Scottish Ballads* (reprinted by Cooper Square Pubs., N.Y., 1965)
- 2 This refers, specifically, to the ballads enumerated by G. Malcolm Laws, *American Balladry from British Broad-sides* (Phila., 1957)
- 3 This refers to the ballads enumerated by G. Malcolm Laws, *Native American Balladry* (Phila., 1964)
- 4 Randolph, V., *Ozark Folk-songs*, 4 vols (Columbia, Mo., 1946)
- 5 Frank C. Brown Collection of *No. Carolina Folklore*, ed. by N.I. White et. al. Vol 2 (Durham, N.C., 1952)
- 6 Owens, W.A., *Texas Folk Songs* (Dallas, 1950)
- 7 This is based on my own evaluation of the complete pre-depression hillbilly releases of Columbia, Okeh, and Brunswick--about 2030 records.

There have been some song books that handled the musical aspects of folksong in a satisfactory and sympathetic manner: C. Sharp's *English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians* and *The Penguin Song Book* by A.L. Lloyd and R.V. Williams come immediately to mind. But no one, to our knowledge, has dealt so successfully with the problems of accompanied music. The few scholars who have shown as much concern for the tunes as has been traditionally shown for the texts were concerned with unaccompanied song. Folksong books with accompaniment have been of two types: For many years piano accompaniments were the fashion, recasting the folksongs as art or popular songs by both the sound of the instrument and the nature of the harmonies and settings; lately we have been seeing less pretentious accompaniments, with the chords taken from the Weavers/*Sing Out!*/Revival tradition (*Sing Out!* itself does not even publish a piano score).

The *Ramblers' songbook* owes a good deal of its success to music editor Hally Wood Stephenson, who combines the musicologist's erudition with enough respect and love for old-time music to meet it on its own terms. Here we have transcriptions that seem faithful to the tradition (in all honesty, we have not checked most of them) but are not so cluttered with ethnomusical symbols as to be unreadable. The chords are taken from the sources--not prettied up or Europeanized. In addition to the melodic line and underlying chords, the songs often include transcriptions of fiddle, banjo, or guitar parts.

Banjo music is given both in standard notation and tablature. Songs have been transcribed to a convenient key, but the original key is indicated in all cases. However, it is not always clear whether transcriptions are taken from *Ramblers' records* or the original sources.

A wealth of material is crammed into what appear to be brief headnotes. This includes a listing of the artist, record number, and date of the original recording, and references to reissues or *Ramblers' records* where available. Consonant with the *Ramblers' philosophy* of fidelity to original styles, they have often given pointers to instrumentalists to aid in recreating the appropriate sound. However, as Hally Wood Stephenson points out, the best place to learn the songs is from the records rather than the book. As we would expect, the headnotes also contain brief remarks about the history of the song itself. The unique treasure is the mine of information about the artists who originally recorded the songs. The Carter Family, Charlie Poole, Fiddlin' Powers, Fiddlin' John Carson, Dave McCarn, and many others from whom the *Ramblers* have learned are discussed to some degree.

It is unfortunate, but almost inevitable, that a few ambiguities and errors crept into the notes. Thus, *Red Rocking Chair* was recorded in 1949, not 1945 (p. 50); *Handsome Molly* is not the song discussed in the headnotes to that song (p. 51); Jimmie Rodgers was not the first hillbilly artist to yodel, as might be inferred from the notes (p. 58);

Man of Constant Sorrow has been traced (see Archie Green's notes to Folk Legacy LP FSA-26) to much older sources than Emory Arthur's recording (p. 129); Crossed Old Jordan's Stream is hardly the only religious song in the book (p. 138); Poor Ellen Smith was recorded on Col. 20629--the extra digits must be the creation of a nervous typist (p. 159); it is perhaps misleading to call Knoxville Girl related to Pretty Polly, since their origins are distinct (p. 166); Little Old Sod Shanty on My Claim seems to be confused with the song it parodied--Will Hays' composition Little Old Log Cabin in the Lane (p. 236). These points are noted here only out of obeisance to the time-honored device book-reviewers use to prove they read the book being reviewed; they are in no way intended to indicate disapproval on any but the most petty level.

So much for the songs themselves. They are prefaced by three interesting and stimulating essays. The first, "Introduction to Styles in Old-Time Music" by John Cohen, tackles the very difficult task of setting to paper an outline of the characteristics of hillbilly music styles and their evolution. Discussed in subsections are fiddle, 5-string banjo, guitar, string band, miscellaneous instruments and vocal styles. It is not easy to put this subject over without falling prey to the imprecise prose that is all-too-often found on record jackets, but Cohen manages quite well. Usually he is careful to give examples illustrating his points, referring either to songs in the book or on Ramblers' recordings. There are, however, tantalizing exceptions. "A

practiced ear can distinguish between East and West Texas fiddling," he writes, but gives us no clues how. Also it is somewhat surprising to read that "...much of (Riley Puckett's) individual style was based on the complex chromatic runs he employed..." since Puckett's runs were generally tied firmly to the diatonic scale.

Naturally, space limitations have limited the extent of documentation and elaboration Cohen can provide. For example, he writes that Maybelle Carter "introduced the idea that the guitar could pick melody as well (as providing background, etc.)." It is interesting to consider the case of Charles Lewis Stine, whose only record preceded the first Carter Family recordings by 2-1/2 years and featured melody on the bass strings. If he had achieved as great popularity as the Carter Family, would the style have been introduced that much earlier? Similarly, one can question the statement that "...In the oldest technique, the (banjo) picking is done entirely with a downward motion of the hand and fingers." Cohen probably refers to mountain banjo music; however, there is evidence that as played by antebellum Negroes, the banjo was plucked as well as struck.

These are minor quibbles. As a whole, the essay provides many stimulating insights, and one only hopes that John Cohen will one day expand it into a monographic study of old-time styles. We were particularly intrigued by his theory of two polar string band styles, which merits elaboration.

The second essay is entitled "Some thoughts About Old-Time Music," written by Mike Seeger (with Paul Nelson). After briefly outlining some of the economic, social and musical factors that affected old-time music, and relating some anecdotes of how some of the old-time musicians came to make records, the

authors report a very interesting interview Seeger had with Frank Walker, one of the most important of the early A&R men active in both areas of hillbilly and race music. It is often forgotten that hillbilly music is the product of the encounter between musician and businessman, and the contributions of both are important.

Following a brief explanation of the musical conventions followed by Hally Wood Stephenson is a rambling essay, "Adapted and Arranged in the Public Domain, in which Cohen puts forth his thoughts on the problems of writing and copyrighting folksongs. He concludes with "...It is our desire to see this material return to its public domain status, and, in areas where authorship is questionable, to turn the benefit of doubt toward the side of the public source." The motive is noble, but we have yet to see a plan that would untangle the knotty legal problems of folksongs and copyrights.

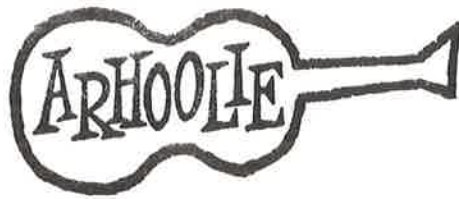
As an added bonus to all that has been described, there are over eighty excellently chosen photographs of important and lesser known musicians, posters, and appropriate scenes of rural and town life. We thought particularly well-suited the photos accompanying the songs Tragic Romance, Single Girl, Married Girl and Man of Constant Sorrow. We have only to add one final complaint--the book should have been made available in hard-cover, so it might last as long as it deserves under what will surely be heavy usage by every purchaser.

--Norm Cohen & Dave Cohen

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Copies of this first issue of *American Folk Music Occasional* include: "The Damn Tinkers," by Mack McCormick; "An Interview with the Staple Singers"; "Meeting the Blues," by Sam Charters; a pictorial survey of "Blues from Coast to Coast"; "A Talk With Mahalia Jackson," by Leonard Feather; "Mainer's Mountaineers," by Chris Strachwitz; "Playing the Dozens," by Roger Abrahams; "Mance Lipscomb," by Mack McCormick; "Ballads of the Okies," by Todd and Sonkin; "Eagles on the Half," by Paul Oliver; "Can Bluegrass Grow on City Streets?" by Toni Brown; "Now Come All You Good People," by H. Leamy; "Folkmanship in Berkeley," by Ken Spiker, plus record reviews, and lots of photos.

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